‘American Murids: Muslim proponents of nonviolence open alternative conversations about Islam, *jihad* and immigration’

Jonathan Bornman

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ABSTRACT

This ethnography of a Senegalese religious community in New York, the Muridiyya, brings into conversation a nonviolent Sufi Muslim witness with an American discourse on Islam, violence and immigration. Murids put into practice the spiritual and ethical values of nonviolence learned from their founder, Shaykh Amadu Bamba. Starting with historical analysis and drawing on primary sources in Wolofal this study analyses what influenced Bamba towards the practices of nonviolence he developed. Then, through participant observation and interviews, the ways his disciples create Murid space in the diaspora and how they relate to the pluralistic non-Muslim context New York are explored. This thesis argues that Murids in post 9/11 New York continue to develop and modify their practices of nonviolence, recasting their founder as a Muslim peacemaker. Analysis of a new youth movement, Ndawi Serigne Touba, shows young Murids negotiating inter-generational tensions as they gain status and social capital in the community through mastery and performance of Muridiyya rituals. These youth see themselves as ambassadors with a mission to renew faith in Islam by serving Shaykh Amadu Bamba and putting his teaching into practice in all areas of life. It is shown that Murids in the diaspora seek to pass on their spiritual, ethical and cultural values to insiders and that they have a contribution to make to other Muslim communities and to the world through advocating their values and practices of peace and nonviolence. This study generates a new theoretical framework for understanding Bamba and the transnational Muridiyya through the lens of nonviolence. It argues that Murid space making is a social mechanism for peaceful relations with non-Muslims. This thesis reveals the emergence of American Murids committed to the spiritual and ethical values of Bamba and capable of adapting these to the American context.

AMERICAN MURIDS:

Muslim proponents of nonviolence open alternative conversations about Islam, *jihad*, and immigration

by

Jonathan Frederick Bornman

B.A. (Goshen College)

M.A. (Fuller Theological Seminary)

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DECLARATIONS

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed Jonathan Bowman (Candidate)

Date 9 March 2021

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote.

Other sources are acknowledged by midnotes or footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed Jonathan Bowman (Candidate)

Date 9 March 2021

STATEMENT 2

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DEDICATION

To all who seek and pursue peace

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASA	Association des Sénégalaise d'Amerique
CAIR	Council on American Islamic Relations
ICE	Immigration and Customs Enforcement
IFAN	Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire
ISNA	Islamic Society of North America
MICA	Murid Islamic Community of America
MIME	*Mouvement International des Murid en Europe*
NST	Ndawi Serigne Touba
NYC	New York City
UNESCO	United Nations Educational and Cultural Organization
NYPD	New York Police Department

'Let us go, we said, into the Sea of Cortez, realizing that we become forever a part of it; that our rubber boots slogging through a flat of eel-grass, that the rocks we turn over in a tide pool, make us truly and permanently a factor in the ecology of the region. We shall take something away from it, but we shall leave something too' – John Steinbeck 1951

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

Fears of violent *jihad* and *sharia* drive American discourse about Islam and immigration. Muslim immigrants are easily associated with violent acts of terror and, for many, considered a threat to be contained, silenced or removed. That American Muslim immigrant communities might offer a helpful contribution to this discourse is rarely considered. The presence of a pacifist or nonviolent Muslim community with a commitment to winning others over to their understanding of Islam is unknown. This investigation into the practices of the Muridiyya, a Senegalese Sufi Muslim migrant community in New York City, is intimately tied to questions and misconceptions Americans have about Muslims. The Muridiyya is a Sufi order founded by Shaykh Amadu Bamba (d. 1927) who was known as an apostle of nonviolence. His disciples in New York offer the counter-narrative of a nonviolent Muslim community committed to peacemaking.

This study asks 1) how does the traditional Muridiyya value of nonviolence impact the way Murids live and interact with other communities in New York City? 2) to what extent and how are Murids practising (or not practising) the traditional spiritual and ethical values of their order as they interact with those communities? My research uses nonviolence as the primary lens, first to look at the founder and the origins of Murid practice of nonviolence and then at the practices of Murids in Harlem, New York. I find that Bamba developed practices of nonviolence as he responded to his context in Senegal. Murids in Harlem continue to refine their practice of nonviolence as they respond to their diaspora context and the growing reality that they are Americans. Their internal discourse

and their practices of nonviolence open alternative conversations with the potential to reshape American perceptions of Islam, *jihad* and Muslim immigrants. In the following sections I give a thick ethnographic description of my entrance into the field.

1.2 A Murid Market in Harlem

My research journey began in a small corner store in Harlem. The green, yellow and red awning over the front windows and entry reads 'Wholesale & Retail, Meat & Fish Market, Halal & Organic/Open 7 Days'. There is a phone number and pictures of a cow, a sheep, a chicken, and a fish as well as a globe with Africa at the centre. The awning also features a Senegalese flag and an American flag side by side. From the outside, the store has a bright, inviting appearance. Inside, there are large boxes of onions on the floor. Bags of hot pepper hang from a shelf above the Jumbo cubes, which are beside the mayonnaise and mustard. Dates, popular for breaking the fast, are available in extra quantities and packages of all sizes and prices. All sorts of grains are available: rice, cracked corn, millet, *thiéré* (millet couscous), *thiakry* (steamed millet flour pellets), *fonio* (a West African grain) and *araw* (millet flour pellets). There is tomato paste ranging in size from large tins to small plastic packages. Blocking the aisle in the centre of the store are 20-litre jugs of palm oil from Guinea. Around the room on the outside walls are shelves, well above head height, that hold pots, pans, and teapots. On the highest shelf, behind the meat counter, are calabash bowls and on one end of that shelf three ceramic pots in their stands for burning *cuurray* (Senegalese incense).

Across the back of the store is a *halal* meat counter, and along the wall beside the counter are several large vertical freezers. One evening I witnessed the arrival of a shipment of whole frozen goat carcasses. The owner's teenage son wheeled them in on a small hand truck one at a time. His mother took her place at the band saw cutting the frozen carcasses into smaller portions for sale. Between the freezers is the aisle one passes through to get to the storage room now converted to serve as a *masjid* (place of prayer).

1.2.1 Visiting a Murid owned store in Harlem

Imam Khadim Bousso recommended that I stay at the *masjid* during my fieldwork visits, so on one of my earliest visits I went to the store. When I arrived, the storekeeper welcomed me and offered a chair. It was 4 pm in the month of Ramadan and hot. Sitting and resting with my suitcase (sheets and pillow included) and backpack, listening and observing, I mustered up the courage to ask about sleeping on the couch in the *masjid*, and I discovered they did not know that the *imam* had invited me to stay there. But they were not surprised either. 'He is our *imam*. He is in control of the mosque', explained the storekeeper (DSM1 2017a).

I sat with the owner and his wife and daughter, while their sons and other employees handled customers, and observed what was going on around me. My chair and suitcase were a bit in the way of traffic, and I was conspicuously aware that I was a white outsider. Every person coming into the store sized me up. Some pretended to ignore me, others greeted me, and a few talked to me for a bit. They greeted me in English, unaware that I speak Wolof. I felt a dilemma--should I reply in Wolof or English? How should I explain my presence? In between interruptions, I told the store owners that I speak Wolof because I lived for ten years in Senegal as a missionary and Bible teacher. I explained that we raised our children in Louga and Dakar, and that our family has many friends in Senegal. Then I told them that I am a researcher working on my doctorate, interested in the practices of peace and nonviolence of the followers of Shaykh Amadu Bamba. They were delighted that I know Senegal and speak Wolof.

During my three-hour stay, I heard the storekeeper speaking Wolof to his six-year-old daughter, who replied in English. 'Daddy, can I go with you?' (DSM4 2017). Her father ignored her question. He was leaving to go to a community meeting in the church basement where the Murid community rented space to pray during Ramadan. He spoke English quite well, which made me wonder which language I should use for interviews.

The mother and daughter conversed in a mix of English and Wolof, with light-hearted and gentle words. The store workers teased the daughter in Wolof about when she would get her hair braided. She replied in a bossy way, 'I will do it every Saturday' (DSM4 2017).

Two young men working in the store chatted with me about the soccer match on TV: Senegal vs Equatorial Guinea broadcast live from Dakar. One of them was the oldest son of the storekeeper. He was born in New York and then sent to Dakar to study the Qur'an. He said he memorized the Qur'an and then studied *xam-xam* (Islamic science) (DSM5 2017). When I asked him to clarify what that meant, he replied that he studied *Islam*, *iman* and *ihsan*.[1] After his years in Senegal, he returned to New York and attended Liberty High School Academy for Newcomers. He had just graduated in June of 2017. Recently accepted at Alfred State College, he had many questions about college life and academics. His mother asked if he did well there in his first year, whether he could he switch to a more prestigious college.

It was Ramadan, and this store was a great place to learn about the Senegalese Murid community. It serves a vital function as a 'grand-place' in the community. It is the space where you always know you can go to get information and to see people. The 'grand-place' is in the tradition of the 'palaver tree' seen in villages across West Africa. It is the 'public sphere' (Habermas 2009) where people talk, and opinions form. There was constant traffic on this evening as people came to buy bread to break the fast. The store has an oven and sells fresh, beautiful smelling baguettes. The clients are by no means only Murid, only Senegalese or only African.

[1] This is a reference to the Hadith of Gabriel: *Islam* refers to voluntary submission to God and practicing the five pillars of duty, *Iman* (faith) refers to the five pillars of belief, and *ihsan* is about beautiful behaviour 'that you worship God as if you see Him, for even though man does not see God, God always sees man' (Schimmel 2011:29).

On my visits, I have seen both French and English-speaking Africans, Wolof speakers and African Americans. Baguettes sell for $2/loaf or a bag of three loaves for $6. Many customers leave with more than one bag. When the clock struck 18:48, it was time to break the fast. Dates were handed out to everyone along with cups of Café Touba.[2] There was a scramble to set up for the meal. They invited me to *ndogo* (*iftar* in Arabic, the meal breaking the fast) with them. A man spread out a roll of brown paper down the centre of the *masjid*, and about a dozen people, men, women, and children, gathered around to eat.

1.2.2 Breaking the fast in the *masjid*

The meal was Café Touba, dates, bread, and scrambled eggs with onions and peppers. We all squatted or sat cross-legged on the edge of the brown paper and ate together. People began to relax. Those I had not met before began to ask me questions and to let me know that I was welcome. Several asked, 'Have you converted? Are you a Muslim?' 'No', I replied, 'I am a disciple of Jesus, a Christian.'[3] My answer was met with surprise by some and accepted by others. My status was also misunderstood by some, as two months later while visiting the store, the six-year-old daughter told me about a white man who had converted to Islam and had eaten *ndogo* with them (DSM4 2017). While people were finishing up the meal, an older man stepped to the microphone and made the call to prayer. Then the paper was rolled up halfway to make room for the prayers. The men formed two lines while one woman prayed by herself at the back of the room. The *timis* (*maghreb* in Arabic, the sunset prayer) (Perrin 2012:669) prayers began while a few latecomers were still eating.

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[2] Coffee with spices added, made in Touba and popular with Murids everywhere.

[3] Inquiries about my status as a potential convert were always answered with integrity. I followed the example of Benjamin Soares (1997) who wrote in the introduction to his dissertation, 'While I conducted the fieldwork, including participant-observation, I neither pretended to be a Muslim nor did I knowingly lead anyone to believe that I was' (Soares 1997:27).

1.2.3 No place to stay

Later that same evening, I joined the Murid community for their special Ramadan late-night prayers in the basement of St. Marks/Mount St. Calvary United Methodist Church. The family from the store was there too. Afterwards, their son called me to come outside where I found the family in their car ready to leave. The storekeeper wanted to tell me that I could not sleep at the *masjid*. Another person, a woman who had been there earlier in the week, had returned and needed to sleep there. I assured them it was alright, and that I would go to a hotel.

A group of men leaving the church offered to give me a ride to the hotel that I had quickly booked through an app on my phone. They dropped me off, but I found it was no longer in business. I was left wondering what to do. At 12:45 am, I found a hotel on 112th St. It was a flophouse where the rooms are priced in two-hour blocks or per night, or a whole night for $85, cash only. I walked to an ATM and finally got a room around 1:30 am. The feeling in my gut that I may be in danger, that I am somehow violating my conscience, that I have no place to go and no one to turn to, was painful. I understood in a small way what many immigrants have experienced and the powerful drive this produces to connect with compatriots, family, and faith.

1.2.4 The storekeeper

On another visit, I got stuck in the store during a rain shower. The storekeeper was wearing a light grey robe. After I waited quietly for 20 minutes, he was free. At first, he seemed reticent about starting a conversation, but we began to chat. I asked him if he remembered what I was researching. He thought for a while, so I reminded him that I am interested in how ordinary Murids practise peace and nonviolence in New York. He immediately said: ‘Anybody you see doing bad things, he's not a real Murid. The ones that are real Murids do what is good, and they don't do what is wrong’ (DSM1 2017a).

He then became animated as he told me about educating his children and what he hopes for them in the future. He quoted a verse from the Qur'an in Arabic. He tried to translate it into English and could not, so turned to Wolof. Unfortunately, it was still not entirely clear, but it was regarding how God sees all people as human beings, not as Muslim, Christian or pagan; all people are human beings in God's eyes. He may have quoted, Qur'an 49:13 'O mankind, We have created you male and female and appointed you races and tribes, that you may know one another. Surely the noblest among you in the sight of God is the most godfearing of you' (Arberry 1996), a verse I heard quoted when visiting his *imam's* home.

The issue raised by the storekeeper, in this first significant conversation, highlights an on-going debate among ordinary Muslims, clerics and academics worldwide. What is a real Muslim? Are Sufis true Muslims? In New York, the question is also, what is a real Murid? Does 'doing something bad' (DSM1 2017a) mean a person is no longer Muslim? No longer Murid? Rosander (1997) describes the ongoing religious, political and social discourse that Islamization has imposed on Muslim communities everywhere in these terms:

> Key concepts in this 'unifying' and universalistic identity-shaping or confirming discourse are, among others, sharia (the Islamic law), *jahiliyya* (ignorance about Islam, heresy), *tahara* (purity) and *baraka* (blessing), … Being 'Muslim', a 'good/bad Muslim' or 'non-Muslim' forms part of this discourse, which refers to basic Islamic cultural values. (Rosander & Westerlund 1997:2)

The storekeeper followed his comments about what constitutes a real Murid with an example from what he teaches his children, 'At school, I tell them not to fight with anybody. Even if someone hits you, do not hit back, do not retaliate, you should forgive. This is the teaching of Shaykh Ahmadu Bamba' (DSM1 2017a).

His example is especially relevant for the Murid community living in post-9/11 New York. He ties identity as a good Muslim and a good Murid to following the nonviolence of Shaykh Amadu Bamba, an image that the Murid community in New York is cultivating carefully. The idea that all people are human beings created by God is part

of his ethical foundation from which he extrapolates how to treat other people in the world. Starting with this idea, he explained his understanding that a good Murid can relate to anyone, Christian, Muslim, pagan, or Jew, following the teaching of Shaykh Amadu Bamba. He emphasised that when wronged, one must forgive instead of striking back or getting even.

He explained that he teaches his children to work hard in the store, not to touch what is not theirs (i.e. not to steal), to obey him when they are in the home, and to obey their teacher when they're at school. He tells them not to fight with anybody even if someone hits them. These instructions for his children: do not fight, do not retaliate, do what is good, not bad, learn to work at home. All sound familiar to my Anabaptist Christian beliefs and ethics, like something my father might have told me. I repeated this conversation to Imam Bousso and asked, 'Do most people in your community put this into practice?' He replied that most people do not, that the temptations of the world prevent them from following their good intentions (MICA1 2017b).

My conversation with the storekeeper lasted until the rain stopped, and two Murid men from the community came in to talk with him, disappearing into the *masjid*. Throughout our extended conversation, his daughter was there watching TV. It was a show featuring a white girl; a bouncy gymnastic video related to the alphabet. His daughter loved the show and was singing and dancing along with it, unaware of the jarring incongruencies and cultural distance between the show and her father's life.

1.3 American discourse about Islam and immigration

The context of my research among Murid migrants in New York includes the ways that ordinary Americans are talking and thinking about immigration, Muslims and Islam. Muslims are only about 1% (Lipka 2017) of the population of the United States yet fears about Islam and Muslims play an exaggerated role in our American psyche. For me, like perhaps most Americans, the 1979 Iranian revolution and the hostage crisis at the

American Embassy in Tehran was our first 'encounter' with Islam. The multiple tragedies of 11 September 2001 became one of the primary touchstones for Americans when talking or thinking about Islam and Muslims. The impact of this association of Islam with violence is revealed in a conversation I had with an older white man after church. I told him I was headed to New York for my research among Senegalese Muslim immigrants. He responded, 'Look out, they are all terrorists!' This was the first and primary category in his mind about interacting with Muslims, 'they are a threat'.

'Islam-as-threat' (Belt 2019:13) is a major component of Post-9/11 national dialogue about Muslim immigrants. Islam is associated with violence, and often, the conversation focuses on radical extremism and *jihad*. 'True Islam', the narrative goes, is violent and dangerous. Donald Trump seized on these sentiments during his campaign calling for 'total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States' (Johnson 2015) to the enthusiastic applause of supporters. The ongoing activities of well-known Muslim terror groups (Al Qaida, ISIS, Boko Haram, Al Shabab, and others) reinforce this association. Most Muslims denounce these groups and their claims to Islamic legitimacy, even as they justify the use of violence in certain instances, a position familiar to the majority Christian understanding of Just War and self-defence. Often people project a monolithic, ethnically Arab, and fundamentalist, image of Islam on to all Muslims (Spencer 2013).

Complicating matters further, the Islam-as-threat trope has become a tool in the American cultural wars:

> Several prominent conservatives have consistently promoted the narrative that the war on terror is part of a larger struggle between political Islam and the West, and that an American defeat will set the stage for the Islamic conquest and subjugation of Western countries. Writers and activists such as Pamela Geller, David Horowitz, and Robert Spencer promote this idea. Glenn Beck, a popular conservative author and radio personality, recently published a book titled, *It IS About Islam*, which argued that intolerance and terror are the direct result of Islam's core beliefs. (Hawley 2019)

This bevy of authors, along with Daniel Pipes, succeeded in creating a fear-filled narrative of Muslims taking over America, the so called 'Islamophobia industry' (Allen 2015).

DanielPipes.org claims 300,000 unique visits per month and more than 70 million page visits since its inception. For Pipes, an even greater threat than terrorism is what he calls, Islam 2.0, the nonviolent and lawful Muslim immigrants in Western nations winning public support for Ramadan celebrations and sometimes gaining political office (Pipes 2009).

However, not all Americans accept these arguments. Presidents Bush and Obama publicly differentiated between Muslims and terrorists, or between Islam and Islamization, calling Islam a religion of peace and seeking to find partners within the Muslim community both at home and abroad to combat terrorist organizations and recruitment. Many Americans appreciate and advocate on behalf of Muslim refugees and immigrants, supporting and serving in organizations like Shoulder to Shoulder's coalition of religious denominations and faith-based organizations that are committed to standing in multi-faith solidarity with American Muslims.[4] Another example would be the sanctuary movement[5] churches that shelter refugees within their walls and refuse to co-operate with US immigration policies of deportation or imprisonment of people with an irregular immigration status. Other Americans simply see Muslim immigrants as their new neighbours or fellow students at their school. Despite the significant numbers of Americans favourable towards Muslim immigrants, 60% supported the 2017 partial ban on immigrants from six Muslim countries (Allen 2017).

As Americans try to make sense of the conflicting viewpoints, many seek to reduce the discussion about Islam to a simple 'yes' or 'no' question, 'Is Islam inherently violent or peaceful?' Essentialist attempts to reduce a sophisticated and multi-faceted community to a singularity are misguided and, in the end, give no useful guidance to people living in increasingly multi-faith communities. There is a broad conversation in America about

[4] https://www.shouldertoshouldercampaign.org/national-partners
[5] https://www.sanctuarynotdeportation.org/

Islam, especially since 9/11, focused on security and violence tied to ethnicity, migration and racial prejudice that proceeds unaware of the growing presence of African Muslim communities. These invisible Muslims are not accounted for when people talk about Islam in the United States. My research highlights American Muslims of recent African origins that are generally ignored.

1.3.1 A diverse American Islamic community

Ordinary participants in these conversations are often unaware of the theologically and culturally diverse nature of American Islamic communities that include Sunnis and Shi'ites (practising and non-practising), from many different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Kane 2011:13; Abdullah 2010:11) including South East Asia (35%), Middle East-North Africa (25%), native-born American blacks (20%) and sub-Sahara Africa (9%) (PEW Research Center 2017). American Muslim perspectives range from fundamentalist to progressive and reformist (Barrett 2007). Adding even more diversity is the significant presence of Sufi Muslims.

Sufism is the mystical dimension of Islam (Schimmel 2011:3). Al-Ghazali (1058-1111), an acclaimed and influential Islamic scholar from Baghdad, described Sufism as 'the total purification of the heart from everything other than God Most High' and 'the utter absorption of the heart in the remembrance of God' (al-Ghazali 2000:57). Sufism has been part of Islam since its earliest days and 'the religious practices of more than half of today's Muslim population' are Sufi practices (Ernst 2011:xv). Venerating saints, praying at shrines, doing *zikr* ('recollection', repetition of divine names or religious formulae) and strong bonds between masters and disciples; these practices are common to Sufi communities worldwide (Werbner 2002; Pinto 1995; Ernst 2002). Prior to the mid-twentieth century Western interaction with Sufism was limited primarily to those who contacted Islamic mysticism in the East or in turn the occasional Sufi traveller in the West (e.g., Hazarat Inayat Khan who founded Sufi groups in Europe and the United States

as early as the 1910s) (Geaves et al. 2009:Kindle location 153). Large-scale migration of Muslims to the West in the mid-to-late twentieth century resulted in significant Sufi diaspora communities. Theorists of diaspora Sufism offer multiple models in their attempts to categorize and understand the dynamic interaction of diaspora Sufi communities within pluralistic societies.

Hermansen (1997) used a garden metaphor to theoretically organize Sufi *tariqas* in the West as either 'hybrids' or 'perennials' (155). 'Hybrids' being Sufi groups more closely identified with Islamic sources and perennials as those oriented towards universalist ideas of eternal truth underlying all religions. Hazen (2011) attributes to Hermansen a third category, 'transplants', referring to 'to small groups of ethnic Muslim immigrants who practice the traditional Sufism of their homelands' (Hazen 2011:76). Hazen notes the limited applicability of this category because of 'the natural process of acculturation over time to the local setting' (Hazen 2011:76). In the British context, Geaves (2009) created the term 'cultural binary fission' (97) to describe the way that Sufism, up to the end of the 20th century, functioned as a boundary mechanism. Geaves observed that for South East Asian migrants in Britain, 'the primary purpose for transmigration of religion (in this case Sufi Islam) initially … is to maintain cultural identity, to protect ethnicity by serving as a boundary marker' (98). He shows how this is breaking down as 2nd and 3rd generation British born Muslims move their communities towards more 'hybridity', to use Hermansen's term.

Markus Dressler (2009) suggests three ideal-typical Sufi-Muslim responses to American pluralism: (1) criticism and seclusion (e.g., Naqshbandi-Haqqani *tariqa*), (2) appropriation and active involvement within society while maintaining a distinct identity through religious and cultural aspects (e.g., Muridiyya), (3) the amalgamation of Sufi-Muslim and American identities to create an 'American Islam' (e.g., Feisal Abdul Rauf, Imam of Masjid al-Farah in Manhattan) (80-81). Dressler's second ideal-type is similar

to Hermansen's 'transplant' category and like Geaves' 'cultural binary fission', Sufism serves as a boundary marker in a hostile pluralistic world. Dressler's third ideal-type of 'amalgamation' is akin to Hermansen's category 'hybrids'.

Julianne Hazen synthesizes these and other theoretical typologies of Sufism in the West into four dimensions, each presented as a sliding scale ranging between polarities. Concerning a Sufi group's orientation towards Islam, the options range between strongly adhering to Islam and borrowing elements from other religions. Regarding ethnic composition of Sufi orders, membership can vary from heterogeneous to homogeneous. Looking at acculturation to the Western setting reveals some Sufi communities preferring to retain as much of their traditional customs as possible and others changing dramatically to fit the environment. Finally, when considering their organisational structures, groups vary from traditional tariqas to New Age movements or associations (Hazen 2011:77). I find Hazen's four components helpful to describe the Murids in New York. In orientation they strongly adhere to Islam, and their ethnic composition is almost entirely Wolof-speaking Senegalese immigrants.[6] Regarding acculturation, it seems that Murids take a moderate approach, where they attempt to retain as much of possible of their traditional practices while at the same time doing as much as possible to fit into American society in order partake of its benefits.[7] Organizationally the Muridiyya tariqa is headquartered in Senegal with a local organization provided by the creation of the Murid Islamic Community in America (MICA).

Murids in New York can be regarded as a diasporic community wherein being Murid, along with Wolof language and culture, continue to be strong boundary markers for the community. Dressler (2009) rightly identified them as actively involved in society while maintaining a distinct identity. However, as Hazen (2011:76) notes many of the

[6] There are some converts, the majority of which are African Americans.
[7] Jobs and education are what I have in mind here

typologies do not take into consideration the element of time. My research contributes to this literature by showing how, after nearly forty years of active involvement in Harlem, Murids have moved in small ways towards Hermansen's 'hybrid' category, what Dressler calls an 'amalgamation' of Sufi-Muslim and American identities. Diasporic Muslims find, in the pluralistic and individualistic societies of the West, ways to construct their identities on the commonly agreed upon 'authentic Islamic core' (Qur'an and Sunna) resulting in many diverse expressions of being Muslim (Beyer 2009:17-18). As the title of this dissertation reveals, an American Muridiyya is emerging.

1.3.2 Who are the Murids?

The Muridiyya is a Sufi order with roots in one of the largest traditional Sufi orders, the Qadiriyya. The Qadiriyya brotherhood began in Baghdad and entered West Africa via Morocco and Mauritania (Martin 1995:377). Qadiri *shaykhs* have 'much leeway in determining the mystical practices' of their particular branch (Abun-Nasr 2013:96). Islam also entered West Africa from the east through the missionary work of the Jakhanke clerics,[8] bearing a pacifist commitment (Sanneh 2016). The Muridiyya order 'emerged gradually between the 1880s, when Amadu [Bamba] first adopted *tarbiyya* (education of the soul) as a method of education, and 1904, when, while in Mauritania, he received the *wird*[9] (specialized prayer of a Sufi order) that consecrated the new *tariqa* (path)' (Babou 2007a:77). The Muridiyya order emerged and began to grow during the collapse of the Wolof kingdoms and French colonial conquest of Senegal (Searing 2002:xxii). Bamba was a Muslim scholar from a prominent Wolof religious family (Babou 2007a:44) and a prolific author (Ngom 2016:21). His mystical experiences conferred on him spiritual

[8] Members of a distinctly pacifist Muslim tradition of West Africa, part of the Qadiriyya, see Sanneh (1974). Their impact upon Shaykh Amadu Bamba is discussed in Chapter Two.
[9] 'The Murīd *wird* is called al-Maʾkhūdhu min Allāh bi- Wasīṭati Rasūlihi (The One from God Transmitted by his Prophet) … Ñaŋ indicates that Bamba also received his *wird* from the Prophet while he was awake, and not in his dreams' (Ngom 2016:172–4).

authority, and he founded Islamic centres of learning. The rapid growth of the Muridiyya attracted the attention of the French colonial authorities, who considered Amadu Bamba a threat. Eventually, he was exiled to Gabon (1895-1902), then Mauritania (1903-1907) and finally was put under house arrest in Senegal until his death (1927). He is known as an 'apostle of non-violence' (Dumont 1975) who, speaking of his suffering in exile, said, 'I have forgiven all my enemies for the Countenance of the Lord who turned them away from me forever, because I feel no resentment against them' (Mbacké 2009:15). The order he founded is unique in several aspects: it validated and incorporated Wolof cultural values into its expression of Islam (Ngom 2016:116), it redefined work as a form of worship (Sanneh 1996:113; Babou 2007a:90), and it embraced a distinctly nonviolent philosophy (Trimingham 1962:227; Ngom 2016:41). Today they are a growing presence in the American Muslim community.

'The Muridiyya is [an] African Sufi *tariqa* influential in the United States' (Hermansen 2014:127). They are a 'special type of a travelling Sufi order in which membership in the order, trade and international migration are intimately connected' (Bruinessen & Howell 2007:11–12). Globally there is an estimated 300-700,000[10] Senegalese outside of Senegal (Judah 2006; Kane 2015:114). It was in 1984-5 that New York became a destination for Murid traders and street vendors (Hermansen 2014:127). Murid migrants founded their first *dahira* (Sufi association or 'circle' group) in New York in the mid-1980s, and by 2001 there were an estimated 30 *dahiras* in the city (Villalón 2007:186). The Murid Islamic Community in America (MICA), founded in 1989, has member *dahiras* in 19 American cities. 'Senegalese immigrants have been tolerated by

[10] Estimates vary greatly, migrant people are difficult to count, for the obvious reason that they are on the move, and because many are undocumented and working in the informal economy. Amadou Ndao, Senegalese Consul General, told me, 'we estimate between 60,000 and as much as 100,000. Reason is that we have those who come and get registered, get involved as Senegalese residing in the States and we have many who have come and who did not get registered. So that's what explains the gap' (personal interview 7 December 2017).

official America, largely because they are perceived as "good Muslims" and "good blacks", and they cultivate such stereotypes to negotiate their integration into American society' (Kane 2011:234). This perception is due in part to 'the duality of race and ethnicity for foreign-born black populations, … in that their foreign-born status has allowed foreign-born black ethnics to situate themselves as elevated minorities' (Greer 2013:intro). The undocumented status of many Senegalese means it is difficult to know how many Murids there are in the United States. There are an estimated 30,000 Senegalese in New York, approximately half of whom are Murid (Abdullah 2010:13; Clayman & Lee 2010:36; Kane 2011:104).

1.3.3 Literature Review

No other religious group in West Africa has generated more scholarship than the Muridiyya of Senegal. Historically the literature on Muridiyya studies can be divided into three generations of scholarship. In the first generation, Paul Marty an Islamist for the French colonial Muslim Affairs Bureau (Robinson 1999:193), published two works in 1913 and 1917. Marty viewed Bamba as a potential militant and believed that he was using Islam as a 'means [of] passive resistance against French civilisation and rule' (Babou 2002:8).[11] Working with the concept of *Islam noir* (Black Islam) as inferior to *Islam maure* (Arab Islam), 'Marty introduced the idea that it was not necessary to study Murid religious beliefs in order to understand them' (Ngom 2016:13). The second generation[12] of scholars attempted to develop anthropological, political, economic, and sociological analyses of the brotherhood (Diouf 2000:681). Finally, the most recent

[11] Subsequent researchers continue to recognize Bamba a leader who resisted racism and colonialism (Babou 2002:169). The Muridiyya has been called a dissident movement.

[12] Authors of this generation include: Cruise O'Brien 1971; Cruise O'Brien 1975; Copans 1980; Couty 1972; Coulon 1981; Diop 1980

generation of scholarship [13] 'traced Murid urban migrations in Senegal' (Diouf 2000:681), Africa, Europe, the Americas, and the ways these diaspora communities inserted themselves into new contexts.

Currently, research about the Muridiyya revolves around four foci: a new reading of the history of the brotherhood [14] that includes the internal Wolof context by drawing from oral and *Wolofal* (Wolof written with Arabic script, also known as Ajami) sources; the ongoing impact of becoming a transnational religious community; the exploration and translation of hagiographic texts; and a renewed interest in the religious, spiritual and ethical dimensions of the Muridiyya. This last theme includes a growing number of university-educated Murids who would describe themselves as 'ideological Murids' (MICA5 2017), more oriented towards the spiritual and religious ideals of Amadu Bamba than to the *shaykh* to whom they may have pledged allegiance. The explosion of scholarship on the Muridiyya since 2000 offers fertile ground for new research.

One current strand of research shows the impacts upon culture, identity, and religious practices in Senegal and the diaspora as a result of the Muridiyya becoming a transnational religious order. Victoria Ebin described the way the Murids combined the formation of *dahiras* and trade in New York and Europe to create new social spaces (Ebin 1990; Ebin 1992; Ebin 1996). Carter adds to her work by describing the way an Italian Murid trade network pursues both converts and wealth for Touba (Carter 1997). Bava suggests that Murid immigrants in foreign lands create new ways to be Murid while holding to the central elements of the Muridiyya (Bava 2003b). Other researchers examine the circulation of people and money between Senegal and the diaspora to evaluate the changes that this is introducing in Senegal and the Muridiyya (Jettinger 2003;

[13] Authors of this generation include: Diop 1981b; Diop 1981a; Salem 1981; Cruise O'Brien 1988; Diop 1990; Kastoryano & Diop 1991; Ebin 1992; Ebin 1996; Carter 1997; Guèye 1999; Diouf-Kamara 1997; Malcomson 1996; Bava 2003a; Buggenhagen 2012; Beye 2014.
[14] (Robinson 1991; Babou 2002; Glover 2007)

Riccio 2004; Buggenhagen 2008). Zain Abdullah (2010) claims that 'Muslim establishments that Africans have created do not merely sustain their survival in Harlem. They have erected an entirely new world' (Abdullah 2010:14). In addition, Ousmane Kane (2011) argues that whether the Wolof integrate into their new society or not, they organise their lives around what will give them status in Senegal. My research goes beyond describing new ways of being Murid in the diaspora to recognizing the emergence of American Murids who, contrary to Kane's observations, orient their lives within their American context.

Secondly, there is an ongoing debate about how to value the materials written in Arabic and *Wolofal* by Amadu Bamba and his early disciples. Fernand Dumont's (1975) *La Pensée Religieuse D'Amadou Bamba* was the first translation and analysis of Bamba's Arabic poetry comparing it to the Sufi tradition of *samā* (listening to music) (Ngom 2016:31). Ahmed Pirzada (2003) offers an analysis of Bamba's writings and those of his earliest disciples seeking to describe Bamba's epistemology. Pirzada offers a Sufi emic perspective, but the hagiographic nature of his sources is not adequately critiqued. Babou and Ngom bring a more balanced use of internal sources, both oral and written. Babou draws on these sources to understand the meaning of Bamba's exile in Muridiyya thought. Ngom makes a significant contribution by bringing previously inaccessible *Wolofal* texts and audio recordings to the English-speaking academic world. All future research on religious, spiritual, and ethical dimensions of the Muridiyya will need to develop ways to draw on the rich hagiographic tradition in Wolof and the Arabic poetry of Bamba (*xassaid*) that Murids everywhere read, memorise, and sing. The particular texts which I observed Murids in New York drawing upon in their *dahiras* and private life became part of the source material contributing to how and where I sought answers to my research questions.

Among the primary contributors to the study of the spiritual and ethical dimensions of the Muridiyya (Dumont 1975a; Babou 2002; Glover 2007; Pirzada 2003; Seye 2013; Ngom 2016), there is unanimous agreement that Amadu Bamba practised and preached nonviolence. Yet, none of these scholars moves from saying it is so to a full description and analysis of Bamba's nonviolence. Only two authors (Pirzada 2003; Ngom 2016) directly engage Bamba's pacifism and nonviolence; both studies are text-based. Babou describes Shaykh Abdoulaye Dièye's mission to spread a message of peace in France and the USA (Babou 2011). I find that Dièye and his mission prefigure later developments among Murids in New York. Murid commitments to peace and nonviolence became a way of reimagining Bamba and themselves as a peacemaking community in the years following the 9/11 attacks. The theme of the 2016 edition of the MICA magazine, 'Cultural Weeks Shaykh Ahmadou Bamba: The Role of African Countries in the Fight Against Terrorism' shows that Murids in New York believe they have a contribution to make regarding peace and nonviolence. It is abundantly clear in the literature that Amadu Bamba lived and preached nonviolence and that his disciples emulated him. Not explored are the ways that modern-day Murids do or do not embrace this value. The lived experience of the Muridiyya in the diaspora, with regards to peace and nonviolence, constitutes a gap in the literature.

In becoming a transnational brotherhood, the Muridiyya has both shaped and been shaped by the localities where Murids have established *dahiras* (Ebin 1996; Diouf 2000; Salzbrunn 2004; Abdullah 2010). However, there is a significant gap in this literature regarding how the religious beliefs and practices of Murids in the diaspora, influence or are influenced by other communities. There is some discussion of their interaction with reformist Muslims; for example, the *Jamaatou Ibadou Rahmane* (Association of the Worshipers of the Merciful) commonly called *Ibadou* in Senegalese slang, and often referring to any person or group with Sunnite tendencies (Kane 2011:48; Augis

2012:437). New Murid movements are emerging from within the Muridiyya that deviate from historical norms (Kingsbury 2014), including a new Murid youth movement in Harlem which I describe. Also noted in the literature is an increasing concern about Salafist influences (Abdullah 2010:123; Burman 2014; Salzbrunn 2004:480; Ngom 2016:48–9).

What happens when a pacifist religious order moves out of its home territory and settles in a cosmopolitan city? The Muridiyya community in New York City began in the mid-1980s. How their founder, their sacred texts and mystical traditions shaped the Muridiyya in Senegal is well established in academic literature. A growing number of studies focus on the Muridiyya as a transnational order and on the ways they shape and are shaped by the new localities wherever they establish new communities. However, when describing the spiritual and ethical values of the Murids in the diaspora, these researchers refer primarily to the origins of the movement, not the living and evolving spiritual and ethical values and practices of emerging European and American Murid communities. I am particularly interested in exploring how the traditional Muridiyya value of nonviolence impacts the way Murids live and interact with other communities in New York City including the exploration of two important sub-questions: 1) to what extent and how are Murids practising (or not practising) the traditional spiritual and ethical values of their order as they interact with other communities? 2) to what extent, if any, are the Muridiyya in New York developing practices and concepts of nonviolence?

1.4 Reflexivity

Why is a white American Christian writing about black Muslim immigrants? My family and I lived and worked as Mennonite missionaries in Senegal from 1999 to 2009, spending eight and one-half years in the rural, regional capital of Louga and one and one-half years in Dakar. I learned the Wolof language to near fluency and devoted myself to cultural learning and understanding. Many of our neighbours and friends were Murids.

We shared the life of the community attending baby-naming ceremonies, weddings and funerals. We participated in celebrations of *Tabaski*[15], *Korite*[16] and *Magals*[17] of various religious orders. However, during this time, I failed to recognise the significance of the Sufi contribution to peace and stability in Senegal. I knew little of Shaykh Amadu Bamba's commitment to forgiveness and nonviolence.

Only much later did I realize the similarities to my own Anabaptist Christian faith. Anabaptists, as pacifists, are a minority voice in the broader Christian world. We are committed to the ways of nonviolence and peacemaking. This commitment rests on the way of the cross, the reconciling ministry of God through Jesus, the Messiah. Jesus rejected the sword and called his followers to love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them. Similarly, Bamba rejected violence and prayed for all people, including those who opposed him. Just as Murids are a tiny minority of the Muslim world, Anabaptists are a tiny minority of the Christian world. Each in their context, they are a minority witness for peace and nonviolence. This observation underlies my approach to the Murid community in Harlem; that somehow, we are spiritual cousins. Perhaps this clouds my judgment making me vulnerable to applying my Anabaptist-shaped perceptions to things that are not what I think they are. On the other hand, maybe I am uniquely positioned to see what others without my background and convictions would not see. To better describe my position as a researcher, I turn to the academic literature on positionality and ethnographic practice.

Anthropologists have wrestled extensively with the relationship between the researcher and the researched. Questions about positionality, inter-subjectivity, reflexivity and constructions of identity have challenged notions of a 'subjective insider'

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[15] Eid-al-Adha, also known as the Feast of Sacrifice.
[16] Eid al-Fitr, also called the Festival of Breaking the Fast.
[17] *Magal* means praise in Wolof. For Murids, the *Magal* is a celebration of Bamba's arrest in 1895, celebrated because they understand it as a spiritual victory.

or an ‘objective outsider’. Narayan (1993) calls for the ‘enactment of hybridity’ (681) and argues that researchers as ‘subjects simultaneously touched by life-experience and swayed by professional concerns…acknowledge the hybrid and positioned nature of [their] identities’ (682). Horner (2002) investigates ethnographic work through the lens of labour, seeing that the production of ethnographic fieldwork needs to value the labour of all of the participants. Multiple authors call for the recognition of ‘third positions’ beyond the insider-outsider divide. Drawing upon Maori constructions of host-guest relationships, Harvey (2003) proposes the ‘guest-researcher’ (142) he says, ‘guesthood’ is ‘predicated on the host’s sovereign power to initiate and/or reject potential guests’ (143). ‘Honorary insider’ is another third position that ‘can partly transcend ethno-national boundaries through language skills, cultural competence and sustained commitment to a migrant group’ (Carling et al. 2014:50). Geaves (2019) proposes yet another alternative, ‘strategic temporary insider’ (64), based on his experience of being granted the ‘temporary status of “Muslim”’ (62).

From the beginning of my fieldwork, I saw myself as a guest. As such I chose to wait for invitations and to ask permission, for example calling the imam early in the week to ask if it would be okay to visit the mosque for the Friday prayers. When a few persons in the Murid community learned that I spoke Wolof and that I had lived extensively in Senegal I soon received invitations to many events and activities normally reserved for insiders. By some unspoken agreement, I was given ‘honorary insider’ status and became an honorary member of Ndawi Serigne Touba. ‘Guest-researcher’ also applies to my position, as it was well known that I was doing research for my PhD. Guest-researcher with honorary insider status was bestowed on me by my hosts, thus giving them significant agency and power in the relationship. Some in the Murid community regularly invited me to convert to Islam and others spoke of me as someone interested in Shaykh Amadu Bamba (in context this carried the connotation that I was a ‘seeker’ looking to

convert). Throughout my fieldwork, I choose 100% transparency about the fact that I had been a Christian missionary in Senegal and was currently employed as a consultant for Christian-Muslim relations by Eastern Mennonite Missions.[18] Geaves found the 'temporary status of "Muslim"' conferred upon him by a Deobandi shaykh 'strategic' and 'relational' (Geaves 2019:63–64). My religious convictions did not allow such a possibility and as my experience shows, conversion (temporary or otherwise) was not required to gain honorary insider status.

1.4.1 What is the role of past experiences in research?

Looking back at old missionary newsletters that I sent to my church, I found a paragraph that described how Senegalese Muslims:

> [Participate] in a brotherhood called a *tariqa*. (People in Louga are divided between the Mouride and the Tijani brotherhoods.) The *tariqa* is then divided into subsets, called *dahira*. The *dahira* is generally a smaller group of acquaintances; and many, if not most, families are members. They collect dues and use the funds to finance projects, parties and loans to members. The members take turns hosting Thursday nights of prayer, singing and religious instruction—*tour jangal.* (March 2000)

Digging through those old letters revealed a variety of Murid friends. One taught me that when someone calls your name, that instead of saying, 'What?' or 'Yes!' you should reply 'Mbacké!' to call to mind Shaykh Amadu Bamba Mbacké. Another Murid friend, a bricklayer whose wife died in childbirth, and who struggled with alcohol addiction, told me he believed in Jesus' life and teaching, and his death and resurrection. Furthermore he wanted to keep his faith in Muhammad and Amadu Bamba.[19] His comments revealed the complex and personal nature of belief; most Murids love and appreciate Jesus but reject the crucifixion and resurrection.

In some ways, it is as if I did ten years of participant observation before starting my fieldwork in Harlem. Those relationships, experiences and memories profoundly impact

[18] I freely gave out my business card that on one side gave my role as a Christian-Muslim relations consultant on one side and my role as a PhD student at Middlesex University on the other.
[19] October 2005

my research. Prior knowledge meant that I entered the diaspora community in Harlem with some cultural and linguistic abilities but also carried biases, both positive and negative. One negative bias I learned in Senegal from non-Murids was that Murids were unthinking disciples, slavishly following their *shaykh*. My contacts in New York quickly changed this perception as I discovered significant internal discourse about what it means to be a Murid and encountered many articulate Murid intellectuals. My experience in Senegal prevented me from getting caught up in what might be considered simple external matters, freeing me to ask questions about motivations and commitments. At the same time, this turned out to have adverse effects on my research, as my familiarity with clothing, greetings, and Wolof cultural expressions blinded me to their importance. Only in looking back at my data did I realize that the ways people dress and move in New York are also important. It is these movements and expressions that communicate their keen sense of 'we' and 'they', boundary markers for their community.

1.4.2 Was I a spy? Issues of power and context

On multiple occasions during my fieldwork, I was called a spy, or it was insinuated that I must be a spy. Initially, I took this in the immediate sense, somehow a spy for NYPD, FBI or ICE. This may have been what the persons were referring to; however, I think that perhaps what was being referenced was a much deeper and more sinister problem. Reading Renato Rosaldo's (1986) 'From the Door of his Tent: The Fieldworker and The Inquisitor' in which he investigates issues of power in E. E. Evans-Pritchard's *The Nuer* and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou* caused me to consider the matter more carefully:

> Both *The Nuer* and Montaillou begin with introductions that reveal their investigators' close links to contexts of domination, and simultaneously attempt to deny the connections between power and knowledge. Their ultimately unconvincing opening project is to bracket the purity of their data ('My study of the Nuer' and 'the direct testimony of the peasants themselves') from the contaminating contexts through which they were extracted (88).

The investigator is the anthropologist, the fieldworker; me. When calling me a spy Murids in New York were linking me into the centuries-old context of white colonial domination of the Senegambia and the Wolof. They rightly identified me as a person with power seeking knowledge and were suspicious of my motives. Would I too use this knowledge to dominate? The place of a white person in Senegambia is naturally connected to the French presence that continues to this day. French anthropologists, social scientists, missionaries, political scientists, Arabists, agriculturalists, etc. were part of the colonial project. They were employed to gather knowledge to enforce colonial dominance and control. The colonial government financed all these activities. Thus, using Rosaldo's imagery, French colonial Senegambia was the 'contaminating context' through which these scientists 'extracted' their data.

Rosaldo unmasks the colonial project and its attempts to be scientific at the same time as they suppressed and coerced the people they subjugated:

> In *The Nuer* the narrator immediately announces the connection between the fieldworker's research and the colonial regime by saying, in the book's initial sentence: 'My study of the Nuer was undertaken at the request of, and was mainly financed by, the Government of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, which also contributed generously toward the publication of its results'. Evans-Pritchard disarms his readers with his studied casualness (88).

Just as Evans-Prichard was funded by the English colonial government and not trusted by the Nuer, so too Paul Marty in the employ of the French was not trusted. It is no surprise that Senegalese scholars consider him a hostile source; he was a 'spy'.

It is only fair to ask, 'To what extent am I like Evans-Prichard?' Scholarships from Christian organizations, including Eastern Mennonite Missions where I continue to serve as a Mennonite missionary partially finance my research. The work of missionaries has sometimes been subverted and appropriated for political ends, even if in many instances it also critiqued colonial governments. At the same time, I am motivated by a strong desire to understand and seek the cultural/spiritual/ethical gifts that Murids have to share with the world, including with Christians. I make no claim of objectivity, but rather a claim of listening to and honouring the religious other.

Rosaldo problematizes the way that Evans-Prichard portrayed the challenges/questions put to him by the Nuer person he interviewed, '"Why do you want to know the name of my lineage?" and "What will you do with it if I tell you? Will you take it to your country?"' (91) by setting the conversation in the context that Evans-Prichard obscures, that of government raids on Nuer camps. Similar conversations are part of my fieldwork experience, people asking me questions about who I am, what is my real name[20] (MCM21 2019) and what I will do with what I learn from them. These concerns reveal a deeper complex history of betrayal and/or being taken advantage of that is part of the Wolof interaction with white French colonial domination of Senegambia and which implicated itself into my conversations with Murids in New York.

1.5 Scope of the study

The scope of this research is limited to the Muridiyya migrants in New York City. Murids in New York think of themselves as part of a global diaspora with 'Little Senegal' on 116th St in Harlem as their centre. 'Little Senegal' lives more strongly in the imagined identity of Senegalese people than in actuality, due to the pressures of gentrification that have pushed Senegalese immigrants into all the neighbourhoods of the city and surrounding municipalities, as well as cities across the United States (Adams 2016; Abdullah 2009). Despite this, Murids do own apartments, stores, and restaurants on 116th St. as well as a small *masjid* (mosque). When I use the phrase 'Murid community' it is in the idealised sense of 'we' with which Murids see themselves, not as a physical or geographically bounded community.

Although the scope was limited to Murids in New York, several interviews took place in Senegal. The *imam* at Daara Ji[21] hosted me in his home in Touba and guided me

[20] When living in Senegal and during my research in New York, I often went by my Senegalese name, Malick Dieng.
[21] The *masjid* and *Qur'anic* school on 116th Street in Harlem.

on a tour of holy sites. I also had the opportunity to interview the head librarian of the library dedicated to Bamba's writings in Touba. As part of my background work on Murid understandings of nonviolence, I spent three days in Pout, Senegal at the *zawiya* (Sufi lodge) of Shaykh Aly N'daw[22] who generously hosted me and gave me three interviews. I also interviewed one of his disciples in Harlem.

1.6 Methodology and fieldwork challenges

My fieldwork was informed by reading the work of others who did ethnographic research among African immigrants in Harlem. Abdullah (2010) spent time in stores talking with the owners, and provided a thick description of a store in Harlem while discovering meaning in a single conversation that clarified broader issues (Abdullah 2010:59). Stoller (1997) conducted much of his research into New York's West African street traders by sitting among the stalls of the African Market on 125th St. (now located on 116th). He described the way he positioned himself and his method of collecting data saying, 'I had to leam how to do North American street ethnography among a mix of people, many of whom were in violation of city regulations, trademark and copyright statutes, and immigration laws' (Stoller 1997:90). Similar to Stoller; I soon found out that many people were 'suspicious of any newcomer' (Stoller 1997:90), fearful that I was a spy of some sort. Informed by the experiences of Stoller and Abdullah, I took care to move slowly, follow relational lines and to allow people to reveal themselves and their networks to me. Not living in the community, I sought a starting point for each trip into Harlem. The corner store in Harlem became that place. Moving to Harlem was not a realistic option, so my fieldwork was conducted in the form of intermittent visits of two to five days, a total of 25 trips. However, this does not necessarily mean distance or lack of immersion,

[22] Successor and spiritual heir of Cheikh Abdoulaye Dièye, the first Murid *shaykh* to articulate the Muridiyya vision for and seek disciples in the West.

because ‘in a world of infinite interconnections and overlapping contexts’ (Amit 2000:6) the field is constructed using all the possibilities, relationships, connections and opportunities available. I used social media to stay in touch, often finding out about important events via Facebook, exchanging texts and occasional phone calls with contacts in the community. Social media interaction is useful to establish contact but is lacking in context and nonverbal clues. The use of social media privileges the younger 1.5 [23] and 2nd generations while older persons prefer ‘in-person’ interactions.

Because American discourse about Islam and Muslim migrants is highly contested some readers may pose questions and objections to my findings, similar to ones I have already received while presenting portions of this research in student seminars. Some will find it hard to believe I am not presenting a sanitized thesis or suspect that I am withholding negative data. Throughout my fieldwork I tried hard to find discrepancies between the Murids’ teaching on nonviolence and their behaviour but found little. The contradictions and discrepancies I did find are addressed clearly throughout the thesis. Additionally, some may ask, ‘How do you know that your contributors were telling the truth?’ The very nature of ethnographic research is to observe the ways people speak about their subjective experience, their social constructions of reality and to consider how these inform the way they live. Finding the absolute truth was not my objective, rather my research focused on Murid’s own constructions of peace and nonviolence and how these inform their everyday practices. Like all religious communities Murids themselves struggle with the inevitable gap between ideals and lived realities as is revealed in the chapters that follow.

[23] Persons born in another country who came to the United States as a child, speak native language at home, but learn English and American culture at school, Culturally they are between those first generation adult immigrants and those born in the United States (second generation)

1.6.1 Interview techniques

Many persons were reticent about interviews, whether recorded or not. The storekeeper on the north edge of Harlem and other first-generation immigrants told me that they would not allow me to record an interview (DSM1 2017b). Similarly, one woman said 'Yes' to an interview, but avoided making an appointment (DSM8 2018). However, these same people were open and shared freely in ordinary conversation the very things that I sought to learn. Most of my data collection has been by participant observation, informal interviews and casual conversations (Spradley 2001:334). My technique, following a significant conversation, was to withdraw to a separate location and quickly write down from memory as much of the conversation as I could. I usually did this in short bits, then later went back and filled in more details (Srinivas 1976; Pezeril 2008). I took all my notes in English, translating mentally the conversation that may have occurred in a mixture of Wolof, French and English.[24]

In addition to the many informal interviews, many persons agreed to formal interviews recorded on a digital recorder. All but one of them gave me permission to use their names, but I decided to maintain their privacy. Recorded in homes, mosques, cafes and over the phone, I transcribed these interviews in the language used and then translated them into English. Formal recorded interviews were not weighted more heavily than informal interviews because both methods produced valuable data. The type of interview chosen was dependent on what worked with different people. I collected 28 formal and 70 informal interviews, including Murids, non-Murids, Christians, and Tijaniyyas.

1.6.2 Primary texts

Participant observation and interviews, whether formal or informal, generated most of my data. I also drew upon a variety of other sources. Each year as part of celebrating Shaykh

[24] I am not alone is using this method. Pezeril (2008) did the same in her research.

Amadu Bamba Day in New York, the Murid Islamic Community in America (MICA) publishes a magazine and organizes a conference hosted in the UN General Assembly Hall. The conference draws high profile Murid religious and academic leaders whose speeches and papers are a vital source for analysing Murid understandings of nonviolence. Thanks to the work of Fallou Ngom (2016) and the Oxford University Press companion website for his book, some of the poems that I heard recited in Harlem are available in their original *Wolofal* script along with translations in English. I learned to read *Wolofal* (albeit at an elementary level) to confirm for myself the veracity of claims about Murid commitment to nonviolence and Bamba's Qur'anic hermeneutic found in these texts.

1.7 Preview of Chapters

Chapters Two and Three are companion chapters. In the second chapter, I excavate the foundations of Murid nonviolence first from secondary sources of Murid history and hagiography as well as from primary source material from oral sources and from literature written in *Wolofal* that enable me to claim that Bamba's nonviolent approach is a response to the context of his time and place. I show that his childhood's traumatic experience as a victim of violent *jihad* turned him away from violence. His family connection to the Qadiriyya order and his subsequent education under his father and other teachers influenced by the Suwarian pacifist tradition, including the Jakhanke clerics described by the late Lamin Sanneh (1974), reveal that his commitment to nonviolence is not an anomaly but part of a much older West African Islamic pacifist tradition.

Shaykh Amadu Bamba drew upon positive Wolof cultural and moral values that aligned with Islamic values of *ihsan* (beautiful behaviour) to create a Murid spiritual and ethical code which he expressed in his poetry dedicated to the education of his disciples. Bamba understood himself to be the servant of the Prophet; as such, he styled himself after the suffering Prophet in Mecca. I show that Bamba brought a community well-being hermeneutic to his study and teaching of the Qur'an. Finally, in this chapter, I argue that

the other Abrahamic faiths influenced Bamba and that Jesus influenced his strong emphasis on forgiveness and nonviolence. The combination of these influences upon Bamba translated into a nonviolent life and teaching.

Bamba's writings and conduct reveal his practice of nonviolence. In Chapter Three, I show that Bamba's writings and those of his interpreters, condemn violent *jihad* and encourage nonviolent practices. He famously wrote, 'I have forgiven all my enemies' and 'The true warrior in God's path is not he who kills his enemies, but he who combats his ego (*nafs*)'. Throughout his life, he relentlessly pursued this Sufi path of combatting the ego to achieve spiritual perfection and nearness to God. This quest gained expression in a life of nonviolent practice. Twice he walked toward those coming to arrest him to prevent any potential violent confrontation between his followers and the soldiers. In the court at St. Louis, he performed an act of nonviolent resistance by performing two prayer-cycles facing Mecca, indicating that God was the real authority, not the colonial court. While under house arrest, he developed and articulated a way for himself, and his disciples, to live as faithful Muslims in a pluralistic world outside of his control, the *dar-al-muridiyya* (house of Muridiyya) within the *dar-al-kufr* (house of the unbelief). He created a way for Murids to be faithful Muslims without wielding political control of territory. The Murid diaspora in New York City has adopted this understanding of creating Murid space within the place controlled by non-Muslims, allowing them to relate to the world around them from a state of peace.

To make sense of Bamba's practice of nonviolence, I create a theoretical framework that allows me to identify what type of pacifist he was and to chart where to locate him among other nonviolent traditions. Amadu Bamba was willing to suffer for his principled practices of nonviolence. His type of nonviolence engages in the real world on behalf of the poor and the powerless. Theoretically, Bamba was a standard pragmatic pacifist as Islam requires. Practically, in his personal life and practice, he was an absolute pacifist of

the type involved in real-world concerns for justice. Bamba had a personal ethic of absolute nonviolence. Yet I show that Bamba is a complex character; some parts of his story rest in uneasy tension with his pacifism. He supported the death penalty for apostasy and sent 400 Murid men to fight as French soldiers in WW1, two examples that contradict his core commitment to nonviolence.

Chapters Two and Three give a comprehensive analysis of nonviolence and peacemaking in the life of Shaykh Amadu Bamba that is not available in any other source. I start from the beginning, crafting a portrait of Bamba and the early Murid communities that shows a commitment to nonviolence without glossing over the contradictions. This historical analysis is the first step in my argument. Shaykh Amadu Bamba was a leader with a spiritual and ethical commitment to nonviolence, and a lived practice of peacemaking.

Next, the argument takes a giant leap from early twentieth century Senegal to early twenty-first century New York, from Bamba and the Murids in Senegal to Bamba's disciples in America. In Chapter Four, I contend that the ways Bamba created Murid space within French colonial Senegal (the *dar-al-muridiyya* within the *dar-al-kufr)* offer a model for his disciples in Harlem as they make Murid space. I show that making and inhabiting Murid space creates a reliable space from within which Murids participate in a pluralistic world. Murids in New York engage in a multiplicity of activities and strategies to create Murid space (Ebin 1996; Salzbrunn 2004). Even though their space-making activities are sometimes exclusive and unappreciated by outsiders, I argue that their gift of transforming a foreign place into Murid space is a social mechanism that enables Murids to be a nonviolent peacemaking community. Murid theology and sociology does not necessitate controlling physical territory or political control; it merely seeks to make a space for itself within the place of the other. The establishment of Murid space in New York was an accomplishment of the first generation of migrants who first

settled in Harlem. They succeeded in being known as a peaceful Muslim community, something essential to their wellbeing in post 9/11 New York. In the next chapter, I describe the inter-generational tensions emerging as younger Murids seek to assert themselves.

I discovered and witnessed the birth of a Murid youth movement. Ndawi Serigne Touba (NST) emerged in Harlem during my fieldwork, affording me the chance to be the first to describe them. The leaders of NST welcomed me as an honorary member, and they invited me to attend and participate in their general assembly meetings, membership days, and special events. They promoted my research by offering themselves and NST members for interviews. Their openness provided the primary source material for Chapters five, six and seven. NST is a transnational Sufi youth movement and organized as a Murid *dahira* (Sufi association). I show how they successfully employ ritual as strategic ways of acting (Bell 1992). As American Murids who have achieved ritual mastery through bodily participation in Murid ritual, they are now reshaping old rituals and creating new ones. NST continues the Murid commitment to nonviolence, as demonstrated by their response to the shooting of one of their members. Murid youth are laying hold of their future as the next generation of leaders in the New York Muridiyya. Shaped by their Murid religious and cultural values yet also part of American culture, they are seeking their place as leaders in the community. NST represents the emerging face of an American Muridiyya, carrying a commit to nonviolence and equipped (culturally, linguistically, socially) to share their values broadly.

Chapter Six shows how Murids share their faith and values with insiders. Murids in the diaspora, despite challenges and failures, seek to pass on their spiritual and ethical values, including their commitment to nonviolence, as shown by the multifaceted ways they educate their children. I analysed four family stories and identified amidst diversity a fundamental commitment to teaching children Murid Islamic values, Wolof language

and culture. Among older Murid youth, NST demonstrates ways of passing on faith and values using ritualized activities as strategic ways of acting to create ritualized social agents. My analysis of an NST *ziar* (to visit from Arabic *ziyar*) of Shaykh Mame Mor Mbacké reveals the interplay of power and submission, misunderstanding and reconstitution of relationships between generations in New York. NST members introduce and transform Murid rituals in ways that show that a process of Americanizing the Muridiyya is underway. American born Murid youth are beginning to teach the life and history of Shaykh Amadu Bamba in English to non-Wolof speaking Murid children in New York.

In the final chapter, I demonstrate the ways that Murids, believing they have gifts to offer Muslims and the world concerning peace and nonviolence, seek to share these ethical/spiritual values even as they struggle to move from discourse to practice. In Chapter Seven, I document an ongoing, internal dialogue within the Muridiyya, a sincere belief that they have something to contribute to the world regarding peace and nonviolence. Following the events of 9/11, Murids in New York reinterpreted Bamba as a Muslim peacemaker. I argue that the annual Bamba Days parade is a reconciling act of peacemaking. Murids are performing peace through a multiplicity of activities; some are explicit and easily understood by outsiders like the travelling exhibition 'Amadu Bamba: A Muslim Peacemaker.' The renewed commitment to *da'wah* (invitation to Islam) found among NST members is an expression of this desire to share the peace of Bamba that may be misunderstood and rejected by outsiders.

1.8 Conclusion

This introduction starts with an arrival scene; my entry into the New York Muridiyya was unsettling and chaotic. The corner store in Harlem with a *masjid* in the back and the thriving community with which it is associated eventually became familiar. Participating in the life and events of the community, listening to people willing to talk to me informally

and in formal interviews was my primary way of gathering data. I pursued this well aware of the complexities of being a white Christian in an African Muslim community. My interest was to explore the ways that Murids in the New York diaspora put into practice the spiritual and ethical commitments of their Sufi order, especially in regard to peace and nonviolence.

The current American context, with a contentious discourse concerning Muslims and immigration forms the backdrop for my investigation of an African Sufi Muslim immigrant community. My contribution is to take seriously what Murids say about themselves: their intentions, hopes, dreams, and challenges. A question that I have consistently put forward asks 'What gifts do Murid immigrants believe they bring to their new communities?' This question is a missiological one that springs from my Christian theological perspective, that God places gifts in communities and that part of our mission is to discover those gifts. I asked this question in interviews as well as in casual conversations. It is also a question I asked myself whenever doing participant observation. Sometimes the answer is negative; some immigrants come to 'take', intending only to improve their situation. However, more often, it is the case that Murid immigrants are distinctly aware of the community and their obligation as disciples of Shaykh Amadu Bamba and as Muslims to make a positive contribution. Telling their story is my contribution to the well-being of America. Listening to the stories of Muslim immigrants and seeing them as potential sources of good in American society opens doors for a fresh understanding and a healthy shared community.

Before examining the living Muridiyya community in New York City, I probe the foundations of nonviolence in the founder's life. In Chapter Two, I look at the forces and factors that influenced Amadu Bamba towards nonviolence, including the socio-political context, his ancestry, and his personal experiences.

CHAPTER 2: INFLUENCES UPON SHAYKH AMADU BAMBA TOWARDS NONVIOLENCE

2.1 Introduction

Imam Bousso, the official *imam* of the Murid Islamic Community of America (MICA), invited me to visit him at his apartment in Harlem. While introducing himself, he told me, 'Shaykh Amadu Bamba is all about peace, love and forgiveness' (MICA1 2017). His statement prompted me to tell him about my Anabaptist faith using the story of Michael and Margaretha Sattler.[1] I told him about their rediscovery of the teaching of Jesus, their subsequent preaching of peace and nonviolence (even towards the Turks who were invading Europe), and their martyrdom. Imam Bousso's immediate response was, 'We are the same!' (MICA1 2017). His enthusiasm perhaps overstates the similarities yet both of our communities promote a response to violence that emphasizes forgiveness, trust in God, peace and nonviolence.

What does Imam Bousso mean when he says 'peace'? Did he mean pacifism, peace of mind, or freedom from war? For Murids does nonviolence mean non-resistance, a strategic tool for social change or a response to mistreatment? From where do Murids draw their motivation for peace, nonviolence, and forgiveness? How do they connect their understandings with Islam?

This chapter is an exploration of the foundations of Shaykh Amadu Bamba's nonviolent commitments and lifestyle to identify the forces and factors; the experiences, and connections that influenced Bamba towards a commitment to nonviolence. Among these influences I find that Bamba was deeply affected by living through a *jihad* as a

[1] Michael Sattler (d. 1527) was a Benedictine monk who in 1525 was rebaptized along with a few others, who together launched the Anabaptist movement. After rejecting his vows, he married Margaretha, both he and his wife were preachers and teachers in the Anabaptist movement, and both were executed for their faith, he burned at the stake on 21 May 1527, she drowned eight days later. Michael was the primary author of the Schleitheim Confession (1526).

child. Through his education he became connected to the Suwarian pacifist tradition. His experiences, education and family history influenced him towards Wolof cultural values of peace. When he matured as a leader, he understood himself to be a servant of the Prophet, especially influenced by the Meccan period of the Prophet's life. Bamba brought a community well-being hermeneutic to his teaching of the Qur'an. There is evidence of significant influence upon him from the other Abrahamic faith traditions. Taken together, I find that these influences have significant bearing upon his commitment to nonviolence.

This chapter explores these influences upon Bamba in depth. Chapter Three will focus on the outcome of these influences as seen in his writings and his life, the ways he put this into practice. Understanding the influences upon him and the practice he developed allows me to describe the nature of Bamba's nonviolence and locate the Muridiyya among other pacifist traditions. Before investigating what influenced Bamba towards nonviolence, it is essential to define the word 'nonviolence', and to identify the words Murids use to talk about nonviolence. Identifying the terminology used by Murids in the New York diaspora reveals the words and phrases I drew upon to determine if and how Murids talk about nonviolence.

2.1.1 Nonviolence: finding Wolof terminology

In Harlem, Murids switch comfortably between Wolof, English and French, offering opportunities to hear them talk about Islam, about the Muridiyya and Amadu Bamba in multiple languages. My wife and I were invited to the Murid Islamic Community of America (MICA) *iftar* dinner. We were guests of Imam Bousso. When we arrived, she went to sit with the women as the *imam* pulled me to his group on a mat. He was eating with some of the leaders of MICA, including the President and the General Secretary. They asked me what I do, and I introduced my research as 'How does the Muridiyya in the diaspora practise peace and nonviolence?' I asked them to say 'nonviolence' in Wolof.

Some said *jàmm* (peace) and others said they did not know, one replied with certainty '*baña fayu* (refusal to retaliate or fight back) (MICA2 2017).

On another occasion, I entered the MICA office and found it was packed with young men and women from the Ndawi Serigne Touba *dahira* all talking and working diligently to correct a mistake on the cover of the newest edition of the MICA magazine[2] applying labels to cover the error. After I accepted their invitation to help, questions came thick and fast as people enthused to know me: Are you married? Is your wife American or Senegalese? Is she black? Would you like another wife? Have you converted to Islam? I assured them that I was not looking for a wife and that I was a disciple of Jesus. I asked them in turn, 'When I talk to Murids they often tell me that being Murid is about peace and nonviolence. How do you say, 'peace and nonviolence' in Wolof?' The short answer was *jàmm,* followed by a debate about the word nonviolence. *Yoonu jàmm* (way or path of peace) was what the group settled on that best translates the phrase, 'peace and nonviolence'.

There is no specific word for nonviolence. One can say *bañ̃ñ def fitna* (do not cause suffering) or *baña fayu* but neither encompasses the philosophical and ethical aspects of nonviolence. However, *yoonu jàmm*, the way of peace, incorporates these ideas better. Another Wolof phrase for nonviolence is '*du xeex*' (do not fight) (Ngom 2016:86)[3]. Additional phrases related to nonviolence are *bëgg jàmm* (desire peace) and *nitu jàmm* (person of peace). The word *jàmm* often pairs with *salaam* (Arabic for peace) in greetings. *Jàmm* includes communal and relational aspects of Senegambian society (Maranz 1993:257-258). A constellation of words expresses the concept of nonviolence in Wolof

[2] 2017 edition of *Cultural Weeks Shaykh Amadu Bamba.*
[3] From Ngom's translation of "What is the Murid Way?" by Muhmuud Ñaŋ , author, historian, secretary of Arab Affairs for the 3rd caliph, Abdoul Ahad Mbacké, whose work documents a Murid perspective on Bamba's conflict with the colonial administration, (Ngom 2016:37).

that includes an emphasis on what is best for the community. The word 'nonviolence' as used in this dissertation needs definition. Next, I offer a working definition.

2.1.2 A working definition of nonviolence

Theologically, for both Muslims and Christians, the starting point for understanding nonviolence is the state of *shalom* that Adam and Eve had in the Garden of Eden. There, they were in perfect peace with God, with each other and with the created world. Peace is the starting point of creation, not violence. Therefore, 'there is a way to act in a violent world which assumes the ontological priority of nonviolence, and this way is called "forgiveness of sins"' (Milbank 2006:416). Forgiveness opens the possibility of a return to shalom. Christ-followers see this displayed in the way Jesus forgave those who crucified him. Murids see this in the way Bamba, *Khadimul Rassul* (servant of Muhammad) forgave[4] the ones who had sent him into exile in Gabon.

Anthropologically, the starting point for understanding nonviolence is to understand that 'violence is not a disease as contextualized by Fox; rather it is a phenomenon that is ontologically rooted in human nature' (Shitta-Bey 2016:162). Shitta-Bey arrives at this conclusion after showing how Plato, Hume, Hobbs and Fox agree on the ontological nature of violence as rooted in humans and connected to desire. Shitta-Bey is apparently unaware that this is the premise of Rene Girard's explanation of mimetic violence produced by desire. Shitta-Bey goes on to say:

> Having demonstrated that violence is ontologically rooted in human nature, and as such, it is a normal phenomenon if exhibited by humans either in intra-personal or social relations. However, the inevitability of the quest to preserve self and social existence for the purpose of self-fulfilment and collective development makes non-violence imperative. Following from our discussion, it is evident that non-violence lacks ontological root in human nature. (Shitta-Bey 2016:162)

[4] Bamba's point of reference is the life of Muhammed in Mecca, where he showed patience under suffering and adversity and ultimately forgave his enemies when he conquered Mecca in 630 CE. See sections 2.5, 2.6 and 3.3.5.

Violence stemming from desire is our natural state and drives the way the affairs of the world play out. Shitta-Bey, considering the spiral to greater and greater violence interpersonally and societally sees nonviolence as an imperative for self and collective survival, thus giving back to humans an element of desire that is positive; desire as self-preservation to motivate a quest for nonviolence. Belangia (2014) writing the conclusion to a summary of Girard's mimetic desire proposes that 'The cure for mimetically produced violence will be a mimetically transmitted desire for peace. The model/cure will have to be someone who has transcended the lure of scapegoating violence, but who?' For Christians, Jesus is the model. For Murids, Bamba is the perfect example of a man who follows the prophets, first as the servant of Muhammed, and second as one who faithfully follows all the prophets, including Jesus.

Defining 'nonviolence' as a response to violence requires a definition of 'violence'. Surprisingly, this is more difficult than immediately apparent. The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines violence as: 1. behaviour involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill. 2. strength of emotion or of a destructive natural force' (Soanes & Stevenson 2008). But this does not take into account all the ways we use and think of violence including all forms of emotional, mental, and physical abuse (including killing) not to mention institutional and societal forms. To include the full range of meanings I adopt Shitta-Bey's definition, 'The term "violence" denotes the act exhibited by human (sic) (as an individual or group of individuals) to de-humanize the self and/or the others' (Shitta-Bey 2016:154).

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines nonviolence as 'the use of peaceful means, not force, to bring about political or social change' (Soanes & Stevenson 2008). But this fails to include personal and interpersonal dimensions of nonviolence. There are three common ways of conceptualising nonviolence (Juergensmeyer 1987:463–467). One way to conceive of nonviolence is as an inner state or attitude of non-destructiveness and

reverence for life. A second way is as an ideal of social harmony and peaceful living that is associated with *shalom* or *salaam* and linked to visions of a perfect future. And a third way, is as a response to conflict, as a non-violent approach to confrontation even in situations of oppression. My understanding of nonviolence includes all three conceptualizations. The roots of nonviolence as I understand and use the word come originally from *shalom* as used by the Hebrew prophets Jeremiah [5], Isaiah [6] and Micah [7] (Liebling 2009) and from the life and teaching of Jesus the Messiah. Nonviolence describes the way individuals and communities affirm *shalom/salaam*, even if they suffer for this commitment, and refuse to resort to violence even in situations of confrontation and oppression.

2.2 Shaykh Amadu Bamba: Influences towards nonviolence

Sufism is the natural starting point for any investigation of Bamba and the Muridiyya. When interviewing Murids, whether in Senegal or New York, most will tell me something similar to what Abdoul Aziz Mbacké told me:

> My understanding of the nonviolence of Shaykh Amadu Bamba is that his nonviolence had a spiritual base, the base of worshipping of God, that is to say, the adoration of God. You deny, you purify and remove all ideas of revenge, or hostility, or violence in you. This is the '*jihad al-nafs'*; you fight your soul; you purify yourself. Instead of killing others you kill what is wrong in yourself. [8] (SEN3 2018)

Mbacké is a great-grandson of Amadu Bamba and the leader of a major branch of the Muridiyya. He is a writer, publisher, and the creator of the Murid website (www.majalis.org). He, along with co-editor Djiby Diagne, created a poster series for the

[5] 'Build houses and settle down, plant vineyards and gardens and eat their fruit. Take wives and children. Seek the peace of the city to which you have been exiled' (Jeremiah 29: 5-7).
[6] 'They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore' (Isaiah 2:4).
[7] 'Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid' (Micah 4:4).
[8] Moi, ma compréhension de la non-violence de Cheikh Amadu Bamba, sa non-violence, il a essentiellement des bases spirituelles, des bas d'adoration de Dieu. C'est-à-dire c'est avec l'adoration de Dieu que tu peux niez, à tes purifier et à enlever toutes, toutes idées de vengeance, ou d'hostilité, ou la violence en toi. C'est le *jihad nafs* que tu connais, c'est-à-dire tu combats ta propre âme, tu purifies. Au lieu de tuer d'autres tu tues ce qui est mal en toi-même (SEN3 2018).

2015 Columbia University Conference, 'Islam and World Peace: Perspectives from African Muslim Nonviolence Traditions'.[9] Mbacké places the roots of Bamba's nonviolence solidly within Sufi theology. He sees Bamba's nonviolence rooted in the worship of God and the quest to purify one's soul. Without a doubt, this is correct; however, this alone is an inadequate explanation. Other Sufi leaders throughout history shared this quest to worship God and purify the soul while at the same time pursuing violent *jihad*. It is a misconception that all Sufis eschew violence. Consider this comparison between two Sufi contemporaries[10] in Senegambia:

> Ahmadu Bamba and al-Hajj Umar were among the most highly educated men of their respective generations anywhere in the Islamic world … steeped in the complex hermeneutic traditions of the Qur'an, Hadith, and other Islamic interpretive traditions … both Bamba and al-Hajj Umar were Sufi mystics … however, al-Hajj Umar also believed that God had sanctioned him to wage *jihad* against the non-Muslim heathen of West Africa. (Wise 2017:kindle locations 241)

Umar died fighting in *jihad* against the Muslims of Massina (Wise 2017:Kindle location 238) in Mali. Other prominent Sufi leaders, Uthman Dan Fodio in Nigeria, for example, also used *jihad* to pursue their religious/political ends. Why not Bamba? What were the influences that caused him to embrace nonviolence?

Among the primary contributors to the study of the spiritual and ethical dimensions of the Muridiyya (incl. Dumont 1977; Babou 2002; Glover 2007; Pirzada 2003; Seye 2013; Ngom 2016), there is unanimous agreement that Amadu Bamba practised and preached nonviolence. Ngom (2016) suggests three reasons for Bamba's nonviolence, first, that it was part of his calling; second, his *tafsir* (exegesis) of the Qur'an; and third, that he saw suffering as sacred. Babou (2007) offers the biographical details of Bamba's personal experience of living through a *jihad* in his childhood. Glover (1975) gives the historical context of *jihad* and Sufism in Senegambia and notes the ways Bamba's grandfather and father's reactions shaped his development. Pirzada (2003), from a Sufi

[9] https://www.ias.columbia.edu/event/islam-and-peace-international-conference
[10] 'Umar waged a holy war in the Western Sudan between 1852 and 1864' (Robinson 1985:3). Bamba was born in 1853 and his father had contact with Umar Tal, their families shared the same village of origin.

philosophical perspective, believes that it was Bamba's pure nature that allowed him to be nonviolent. Pirzada also points out the impracticality of fighting a superior force as a reason for nonviolence. In Chapter Three, I examine what can be learned from Bamba's writings.

Taken together the contributions of these authors create a clear picture of the influences upon Bamba that caused him to reject the violence of his era and region and become an 'apostle of non-violence' (Dumont 1977:no page #). In the remaining sections of this chapter, I examine the many influences upon him to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the forces and factors that influenced Bamba towards nonviolence.

2.2.1 Displaced by *jihad* as a child

The historian Cheikh Anta Babou narrates the experiences of the Mbacké family during the *jihad* of Maba Jakhu Ba[11] (1861-186?). Maba's *jihad* started in Saalum (a region in Senegal centred on the Saloum River). By 1864 Maba had a base of operations in Mbacké Bawol (Bamba's hometown) in Kayor. Overstretched and unsuccessful in mobilizing the Muslim population, Maba was forced to retreat to Saalum, deporting with him the clerics as he withdrew, thus displacing the Mbacké family. They 'were profoundly affected by the violence associated with the *jihad*' (Babou 2007a:41).

The consequences of Maba's *jihad* on the Mbacké family include numerous deaths and losses. Abdul Khadir (Bamba's uncle, his father's brother) was killed by 'a group of slave warriors who were avenging the slaying of one of their colleagues during a foiled raid in Mbakke Bawol' (Babou 2007a:40). Bamba's grandfather, Bala Aysa, left the village in distress over the murder of his son and died two years later in Saalum, himself murdered by a robber. Their hometown served as the base camp of the *jihad*. Warriors

[11] Maba was a disciple of the legendary El-Hajj Oumar Tall, a dominant figure in West African military *jihads* and the principle founder of the Tijani order in West Africa (Maranz 1993:203).

commandeered the prosperous town's grain and other food stocks, and they suffered the raids and conflicts of the *jihad* as forces opposed to Maba attacked the town. Slave raiders abducted Bamba's little sister, Faati Mbacké (age 9 or 10). The conflict forced the closure of Momar Anta Sali's (Bamba's father) school. The Mbacké family was forced to migrate from Mbacké Bawol (their ancestral home) to Saalum (approx. 160km). Shortly afterwards, in Saalum, Bamba's mother, Mame Jaara Bousso, died. In modern terms, the Mbacké family became internally displaced persons.

The loss of life and property experienced by the family was significant. How did this impact young Amadu Bamba, and how did he cope? It seems he had characteristics of and used tactics associated with emotional resilience: taking time for silence and meditation (Babou 2007:56), moving towards a goal beyond himself, imagining a good future beyond current suffering, having a clear sense of purpose, and writing (Waters 2003; Marano 2003; Winch 2014). His library in Touba is a testament to his lifelong devotion to writing which includes poems that express his experiences, another form of healing (Pennebaker and Evans 2014). The negative experiences for him and his family sensitised him to the consequences of violent *jihad*. According to Babou:

> Bamba's ideas about life and religion were forged in the course of his stay in Saalum and Kajoor. There, he experienced first-hand the devastating effect of political violence on Wolof society and the failure of the remedies proposed by the Muslim leadership, whether through alliance with rulers or violent opposition to them. (Babou 2007a:55)

Bamba's personal experience during the *jihad* of Maba impacted his development as a leader and shaped his outlook in ways that later show themselves in his refusal to take his father's position as *qadi* (judge), his purposeful distance from politics, his nonviolent actions and personal ethics of nonviolence. Another event he saw further solidified his commitments.

2.2.2 Witnessing the effects of political violence

Sometime in his mid-twenties, after re-joining his father, now serving as *qadi* in Lat Dior's court in Kajoor, Bamba saw another formative event related to political violence. He told his son, Bachir Mbacké (first biographer of Bamba):

> I lost the slightest interest I had in worldly and temporal matters when I saw, while living in Kajoor, the bodies of Muhammad Fati and Ale Lo, two persons from a respected Muslim family in Njambur, [12] killed by *dammeel* (king) for mere political reasons. (Babou 2007a:56)

His personal experience of disgust in witnessing this event, not only caused him to lose interest in worldly affairs but is also one of the reasons he rejected violence in settling conflicts. Babou concludes that this matter added to Bamba's discomfort with the close ties between his father and Lat Joor and that this was a factor that pushed him towards Sufism. The Sufi tradition he joined had a centuries-old commitment to pacifism to which I turn next.

2.3 The Suwarian pacifist tradition of the Jakhanke clerics

Amadu Bamba embraced the Suwarian pacifist tradition he learned directly from the Jakhanke [13] clerics who initiated him. It is helpful to think of the Muridiyya as part of a long West African history in which Muslim minority groups, living among their neighbours following African traditional religion, developed peaceful ways to live and interact with the majority population. The founder of this tradition, Al-Hájj Sálim Suware, lived in the Mali empire but scholars do not agree about which century, Sanneh placing him in the 12th or 13th century and other scholars much later in the mid-15th century (Robinson 2004:56; Sanneh 2016:81; Ford, Jr 2020:5). His influence later gave rise to the Jakhanke clerical tradition whose origins Sanneh (1974;2016) traced from Suware to the Jakhanke clerics of Touba in modern-day Guinea.

[12] Modern day region of Louga, where I lived for 8 ½ years (1999-2007).
[13] The Jakhanke are a subset of the Qadiriyya Sufi order.

Suware made seven pilgrimages to Mecca and then directed by a dream 'return[ed] to his people as a standard-bearer of peaceful Islam' (Sanneh 2016:81). Sanneh describes the origins of 'the separation of Islam and power' (Sanneh 2016:82). This allowed space in the community for both Muslims and those committed to traditional religion. 'The resulting peaceful coexistence was a stimulus for trade, for the comingling of peoples, and of the religious vocation generally' (Sanneh 2016:85). Sanneh describes 'the twin pillars of the clerical vocation as dispersion' and 'opposition to war and politics' (Sanneh 2016:83). One caveat to this ideal clerical life, critiqued by Sanneh, was their dependence on slaves to run the clerical centres. Al-Hájj Sálim Suware undertook pastoral circuits[14] visiting and establishing clerical centres. According to Sanneh, 'the Suwarian prescription is by no means the generally accepted way of following Islam. That is what makes Jakhanke Islam so remarkable—and, in retrospect, its preservation over the centuries so impressive' (Sanneh 2016:101). In the following sections, I show that the Suwarian tradition, as encountered in the Jakhanke clerics became part of Bamba's nonviolent expression of Islam and lives on in the Muridiyya of today.

2.3.1 A relational link between Bamba and Jakhanke clerics

Before examining evidences of the Suwarian tradition in the Muridiyya teaching and practice, I find a direct relational link between Amadu Bamba and the Jakhanke clerics. This link starts with Kararnokho Ba, the founder of Touba (Guinea). Karamokho's life was devoted to '*shaykh* seeking' (Sanneh 1974:198) and 'extensive religious *tournées'* (Sanneh 1974:199). He was succeeded by his son, Muhammad Taslimi:

> [Who] remained in Touba for some twenty years without ever leaving it, except on one occasion when he travelled to the Sahil to be inducted into the Qadiriyah *wird* first by Sheikh Abd al-Latif of the Kounta, and then by Muhammad Khalifah, son of Sheikh Sidiya al-Kabir, of the Walad Biri of Trarza. (Sanneh 1974:200)

[14] What the Wolof call *werente serigne* (Sanneh 2016:89). Serigne Mame Mor Mbacké makes this kind of visits to diaspora communities worldwide including an annual visit to New York every July for the Shaykh Amadu Bamba Days Parade that was founded by his father Mourtada Mbacké.

This reference to the Qadiriyya and Shaykh Sidiyya of Trarza is significant because while the Mbacké family was in Saalum, Momar Anta Sali established close ties with the Qadiri order (Babou 2007a:44). This connection is also commented on by Sanneh (1974) in a footnote about N'Dar Bambo, a student of Taslimi in Touba, who settled in N'Dar (St. Louis, Senegal), Sanneh writes that he 'acted as Amad Bamba's spiritual guide (*murshid*), eventually initiating him into the Qadiriyya Way' (Sanneh 1974:200). The historical research of both Sanneh and Babou show a direct relational link between the founder of the Jakhanke clerical centre of Touba (Guinea) Karamokho Ba, and the founder of the Muridiyya holy city of Touba.[15] The Jakhanke clerical tradition, of which Karamokho was a member, was part of the Suwarian tradition of pacifist Islam. In the following sections, I show that Bamba adopted the core elements of the Suwarian tradition; traditions that continue among the Muridiyya in New York. Connecting Bamba and the Muridiyya to this well-established pacifist tradition within West African Islam reveals that the Murid commitment to nonviolence is not an anomaly but as a part of an older tradition.

2.3.2 The core tenets of Suwarian Islam

The core tenets of al-Hajj Salim Suware's pacifist Islam are discernible in the life and teaching of Shaykh Amadu Bamba and the Muridiyya. Sanneh says that the twin pillars of the clerical vocation were dispersion and opposition to war and politics. He identifies a triad of clerical life: *al-qirá'ah* (Qur'an study), *al-harth* (farming), and *al-safar* (travel or itinerancy). He also describes Suware's devotion to pastoral circuits with a message focused on the 'dual heritage of Jakhanke practice: pacifist commitment, and education and teaching as tools of renewal (*tajdid*) (Sanneh 1974:85–89). Activities that describe

[15] The two Toubas are 475km apart 'as the crow flies'

Suwarian tradition: (1) dispersion, (2) opposition to war/pacifist commitment, (3) opposition to politics, (4) Qur'an study, (5) farming, (6) itinerancy, (7) education/teaching for renewal. The Jakhanke clerical centres relied on slavery, and this is a point of differentiation; Bamba opposed slavery and refused to receive a gift of slaves, causing much controversy (Babou 2007a:58). The primary characteristics of the Suwarian pacifist tradition, as observed in the life of Amadu Bamba and the early Murids, are the subject of the next sections.

Murid expressions of Suwarian traditions: Dispersion

In the Suwarian tradition, dispersion, whether because of opposition, economic need, or seeking new pastures was a source of strength and renewal. As a young adult, Amadu Bamba stayed close to his father, seeking knowledge on his own or from visiting centres of Islamic learning in Kajoor, Bawol and Saalum. 'He did not follow the Wolof tradition of *lakhas* (to travel away from one's family to seek an education) (Babou 2007a:54). During this time he taught in his father's school, gained a few disciples and authored several commentaries and versifications of classical Sufi works (Babou 2007a:55). However, after his father's death, he took an 'eight-month-long trip across Senegal and Mauritania … visited many clerics, read from their libraries ... and received *ijaazas* (certificates)' (Babou 2007a:61).

Establishing villages and new centres of learning is part of the dispersion impulse in the Suwarian tradition. Between 1885 and 1895, Bamba founded Darou Salaam, Touba, and 'resuscitated the ruins of Mbakke Jolof' (Babou 2007a:75). In each case, he started a mosque and a school immediately, and large numbers of disciples flocked to join the new villages. Bamba found that these disciples disturbed his study and meditation, so he adopted a strategy of 'decentralization and mobility' (Babou 2007a:70) entrusting the villages and schools to his most faithful disciples. Exile was another form of dispersion which led to new communities. During his exile in Mauritania, he started a school in

Sarsaara gaining new followers and provoking some opposition from local Sufi leaders (Babou 2007a:150).

Later in Murid history, years of drought[16] in Senegal forced the Murids into the city. The newly urban Murids organised *dahiras* along shared village/regional ties or shared allegiance to a *shaykh*. Adoption of the *dahira* prepared the way for the international diaspora movement that is today reshaping the Muridiyya (Kane 2011:44). Dispersion is a significant part of the Murid story: first in Bamba's life as a student and then as the founder of villages and schools and again through exile. Dispersion through the movement of Murids from a primarily rural orientation to its modern urban and transnational nature helped to restructure and renew the Muridiyya.

Murid expressions of Suwarian traditions: Pacifist commitment

The Suwarian disposition of Bamba is evident in his pacifist commitment and in his opposition to the wars and violence in Senegambia. This commitment resulted in him writing a *fatwah* (opinion) against *jihad*; this is explored more fully in Chapter Three.

Murid expressions of Suwarian traditions: Opposition to politics

The involvement or non-involvement of Amadu Bamba and Murids in the political realm from the colonial era to the present is the subject of books, articles and dissertations as well as being part of the ongoing debates among ordinary Senegalese people whether in Senegal or the diaspora. Most of this discussion is not pertinent to my research. However, in determining the impact of the Suwarian tradition on Bamba and the Muridiyya, two elements stand out.

The first is Bamba himself, who from his youth he disdained involvement with the Wolof kings and challenged his father's service in the court of Lat Dior. Two major

[16] Drought in the 1970's (Buggenhagen 2001:382).

disputes demonstrate this. In one instance, he refused an invitation from the king, to debate with his advisors about a particular case, saying, 'he would be ashamed to be seen by the angels responding to the summons of any other king but Allah' (Babou 2007a:59). Another instance occurred at his father's funeral when he was invited to become heir to his father's position as *qadi* in the court; he replied: 'I do not have the habit of mingling with rulers, and I do not expect any help from them. I only seek honour from the Supreme Lord (God)' (Babou 2007a:59). In both cases, his reply caused anger and misunderstanding.

Second, throughout his life, Bamba placed physical distance between himself and political centres, establishing his villages and schools in unsettled regions away from power. Later, when under house arrest in Diourbel, he was forced to be in the city and close to the French. Within the neighbourhood designated for the Murid community, he walled off his compound with tin[17] to separate himself (Babou 2007a:166). Eventually, during the later years of his life, he moved towards accommodation with the French, a rapprochement, that ultimately served the interests of both.

Murid expressions of Suwarian traditions: Qur'an study

Bamba devoted much of his life to the study of the Qur'an and set up schools devoted to the study and memorization of the Qur'an. It was one option among other types of education that he offered, including choices for those who could not do traditional Qur'anic schooling. Murids in New York run two Qur'anic schools. Chapter Six describes how Murids in the diaspora educate their children.

Murid expressions of Suwarian traditions: Farming

[17]A picture of his compound can be seen in Ba, Oumar 1982 Ahmadou Bamba face aux autorités coloniales (1889-1927) Dakar: SIPS.

Farming was a constant fixture in the life of the Suwarian tradition of pacifist Islam. Bamba himself was not a farmer, but all the communities he founded were farming communities. His education plan for those not suited to formal Arabic and Quranic studies was the *daara tarbiyya* (working school), and central to that education was working the farms under the mentorship of one of Bamba's disciples. Historians record the rich legacy of Murid farmers and *daaras* transforming the interior wilderness lands of Senegal into prosperous farms. [18]

Murid expressions of Suwarian traditions: Pastoral circuits

Following his exile and house arrest, Amadu Bamba did not have a peripatetic pastoral role in the life of the villages and schools he founded. His primary disciples, Cheikh Anta, Cheikh Ibra Fall, and others carried this role on his behalf. This aspect of the Suwarian tradition is a vibrant part of the transnational experience of the new Murid communities worldwide. Serigne Mourtada Mbacké [19] spent the last twenty years of his life strengthening the links between Touba and the diaspora communities in Europe and the United States. The parade and the Keur Serigne Touba house in Harlem (Lo 2011:48) are both the result of his efforts to help the Murids settle in Harlem with a vision for the long term. His son, Serigne Mame Mor Mbacké, now continues in his father's steps focused on expanding the Al-Azar education system [20] and continuing his habit of extensive travel, visiting the Murid communities in the diaspora.

[18] (Copans 1980) among many others.

[19] Serigne Mourtada Mbacké, (1920-2004), one of the most cosmopolitan and the most committed to education of all Murid *shaykhs*. He created a network of Islamic institutes in all the main cities of Senegal (Bambey, Thies, Saint-Louis, Djourbel) as well as in the Gambia and Gabon. Named after the famous Egyptian university, Al-Azar, his network of 400 schools … constitutes a parallel system of education that provides religious and secular education… in addition to his educational role, Serigne Mourtada sought to strengthen the links between the Murid diaspora outside Senegal and Murid communities in Touba and the rest of Senegal. For almost twenty years, he toured European counties and the United States (Kane 2011:95).

[20] https://www.ucab-edu.com/systeme-al-azhar

Murid expressions of Suwarian traditions: Education for renewal

Bamba's initiation into the Qadiriyya order and his association with the Jakhanke clerics influenced him greatly. The Jakhanke message and their centres were places of Islamic revival. In their schools and itinerate preaching, they sought to bring non-believers to Islam and to renew the faith of Muslims. Likewise, Bamba was known by his disciples as a renewer of Islam, a 'pole of the age' (*qutb*). He began this work as a Qadiri, and even though eventually he received his *wird* and founded a new Sufi order, Qadiris still claim him as one of their own. While doing fieldwork in Senegal, I met the *Khalifa General* of the Qadiriyya in Louga. He told me that Amadu Bamba was a member of his religious order first and that he was '*Qadiriyya pur'*.[21] Through this connection, the influence of a Suwarian pacifist Islam and its strong emphasis on education and renewal made a lasting impact upon Bamba and subsequently his disciples right up to today as expressed by Murids in New York. In the next section, I show the ways that Wolof cultural and moral values influenced Bamba.

2.4 Wolof cultural and moral values

Bamba wrote all his works in Arabic, the language of the learned academics and Islamic scholars of his time and place. Some of his closest disciples were encouraged to write and teach in Wolof to communicate Bamba's message in a way that was accessible to the masses. It is these writers, interpreting the meaning of Bamba and his works for the people, who give us much of what we know about Bamba. The stories of miracles, his calling on the day of *Alastu*,[22] and his sufferings in exile were developed and communicated broadly by a few of his primary interpreters: Sëriñ Moor Kayre, Sëriñ

[21] 'Purely Qadiriyya', from fieldnote taken 12 August 2018 in Louga, Senegal.
[22] See Qur'an 7:172; Carl Ernst says, 'Perhaps the most distinctive Qur'anic theme developed by the Sufis was that of the primordial covenant, the pact that God made with the unborn souls of humanity, prior to creation' (Ernst 2011:43–4). It is also on this day that the prophets received their missions from God.

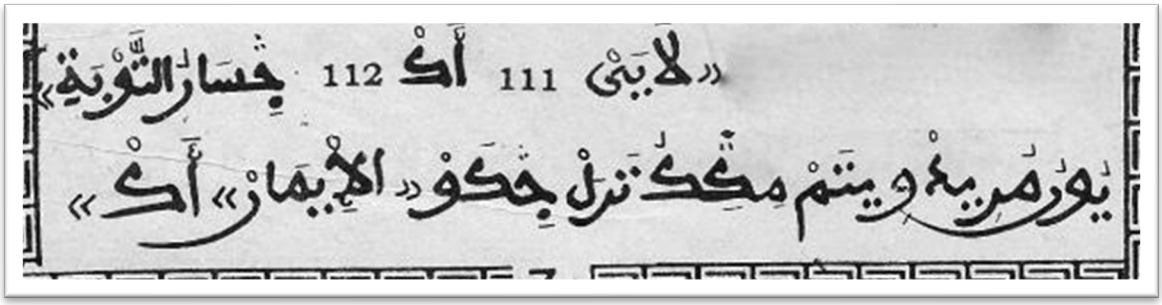
Samba Jaara Mbay, Sëriñ Musa Ka, Sëriñ Mbay Jaxate, and much later, Mahmuud Ñaŋ. It is to these writers that I turn to see what they reveal about what influenced Bamba towards nonviolence.

Traditional Wolof cultural and ethical values aligned with peace became a well from which Amadu Bamba drew. Popular Wolof wisdom includes sayings like *jàmma gënn ay* (peace is better than conflict), *jàmm ci la lep xac* (all things are possible with peace), and *jàmm amul njek* (peace has no price). Throughout Senegal there are many neighbourhoods named *jàmma gënn* (peace is better). Wolof wisdom and phraseology meshed well with his Suwarian influenced understanding of Islam to create a Wolof Islamic code of nonviolence. A *Wolofal* text[23] by Mahmuud Ñaŋ, 'What is the Murid Way?' illustrates a Murid understanding of the way Bamba used traditional Wolof virtues (*jikko yu rafet*) combined with Islamic virtues to educate his disciples. Here is Fallou Ngom's translation:

> Similar to verses 111 and 112 in the chapter, al-Tawba, the Murīd way is grounded in īmān, islām, and iḥsān. It came to remove ignorance, poverty, and idleness; to bring knowledge combined with civility; self-sufficiency combined with work; vigor coupled with prudence; to unite the hearts and intents of people and to teach them steadfastness. Murīd disciples are vigorous and generous Muslims who combine worship of God with work ethic. They share the fruit of their labor selflessly. They are determined and comply with God's injunctions and prohibitions. They do not quarrel, bicker, or fight. They must be humble and pursue excellence. They must empathize with anyone below them and honor and respect those above them. They must treat their peers the way they would like to be treated. These are some of the virtues of The Master that he cultivated in all his followers. (Ngom 2016:85)

Below is the text written in *Wolofal*. Note the numbers 111 and 112 referencing those verses from *Al-Tawba* (chapter 9) of the Qur'an and the circled word which when written in Latin script is '*du xeex'*, meaning, 'does not fight' in the Wolof language.

[23]The handwritten *Wolofal* text and a transliteration can be accessed at http://global.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780190279868/appendices/2-3/



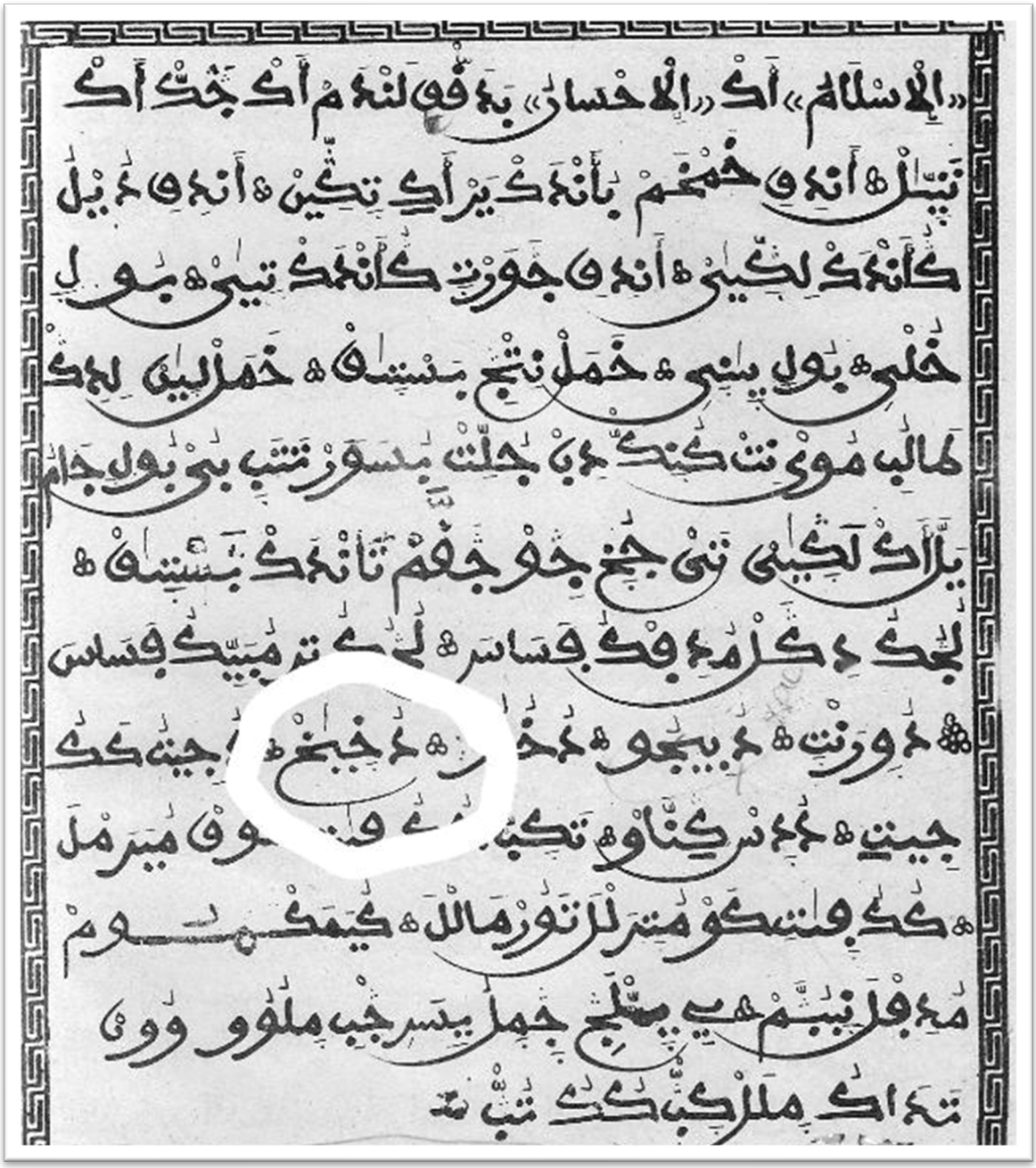


Figure 2.1: Excerpt from 'What is the Murid Way?' by Mahmuud Ñaŋ. The circled *Wolofal* text, '*du xeex',* means 'does not fight' in Wolof

If '*du xeex'* was not referencing this Qur'anic text, it would be merely a standard description of proper behaviour. But Ngom rightly identifies two layers of meaning in this text. The first layer is the social and ethical meaning of the text. The second layer 'reflects Murīds' understanding of Bamba's preoccupation with the danger of radical interpretations of the Qur'an. Militants have used interpretations of verses 111 and 112 of *al-Tawba* to justify their violent holy wars against so-called unbelievers' (Ngom 2016:87). The author uses eight words borrowed from Arabic:

> The rest of the text includes over twenty ethical concepts from the local Wolof culture that comprise *jikko yu rafet*. These include the obligation to fight ignorance, poverty, and laziness; to cultivate civility, self- sufficiency, work ethic, vigor, carefulness, steadfastness, generosity, humility, and nonviolence; and to pursue excellence and empathy. (Ngom 2016:86)

The Wolof word that Ngom translates as 'nonviolence' is '*du xeex'.* Bamba chose to draw upon the Wolof cultural values as exemplified by the peace-loving Muslim scholars (his family was part of this tradition) and not upon the notoriously violent Wolof tradition of the *cëddo* (warrior class known for violence and alcohol abuse). He and the Murid scholars interpreting his teaching to the masses in *Wolofal* used commonly understood language and values. These values influenced Bamba impacting his understanding of Islam and the way he exegeted the Qur'an. One might ask: If these values were part of Wolof cultural and ethical values, why were the other leaders of his day not equally impacted by these values? Why were they pursuing *jihad*, slavery and warfare against other Wolof kingdoms? It seems that 'Bamba understood that these virtues were analogous to the *makārim al-akhlāq*, the noble virtues that Islam teaches' (Ngom 2016:86) and he created a new amalgamation[24] Wolof and Islamic values. The best parts of traditional Wolof values influenced Bamba, and he subsequently combined those values with Islamic values as an essential part of his pacifist message (West & Sitoto 2005:54).

[24] See also, (Glover 2007:55) who describes 'a new synthesis of reformist and Sufi Islam and Wolof culture that emerged…'

One night at Daara Ji, I listened to an old man reciting from a poem attributed to Bamba, 'Seven Things are Better than Seven Things' as he urged the *dahira* members to be faithful.[25] Everyone listened intently and responded with exclamations of '*Eskey*!' and snapping of fingers.[26] The poem uses four Wolof virtues as 'mnemonic devices: *tuub* (repentance), *muñ* (perseverance in the face of hardship), *teggiin* (civility in words and deeds), and *sant* (gratefulness). These words are part of the core ethos of Murīd discipleship that [Bamba's] pedagogy sought to cultivate' (Ngom 2016:104). The purpose of the text is to present moral virtues in an easily memorised way using the number '7', and an 'A' is better than 'B' pattern. 'Master of Touba' is a common Murid way of referring to Amadu Bamba. 'Mbacké' is his family name.

> Thank you, Master of Touba. You are unrivalled, Mbacké.
>
> God Is One
>
> The Master of Touba said:
>
> Seven things are better than seven things: (1) [to] stop lying is better than studying the Qur'an and knowledge [of Islamic sciences] and living by it, (2) controlling your seven senses [sight, smell, touch, taste, hearing, mind, and [heart] is better than fasting endlessly, (3) remembering the hereafter [where only accomplished righteous deeds matter] is better than nightlong prayers, (4) being generous to all Muslims is better than waging holy war, (5) [to] stop sinning is better than repenting endlessly, (6) giving good advice to people is better than giving plentiful alms, and (7) prohibiting immoral acts is better than endless prayers. (Ngom 2016:102–103)

The *Wolofal* text, see fig. 3, reads '*laabiire mbooleem jullit moo gën fetal jihaar*'. It means 'being generous to all Muslims is better than waging war'. The impact of memorising this poem and internalising its moral and ethical virtues would have a powerful effect on a person. A whole community memorising and meditating on this poem points towards the formation of a shared community ethic of nonviolence. It is important to note that the poem opens with the words, '*Sëriñ Tuubaa wax na ne*' (Serigne Touba said), indicating that these maxims are the words of Amadu Bamba. Presumably, the author of this poem

[25] Fieldwork note 12 October 2017 Harlem, NY.
[26] '*Eskey'* is an affirmative exclamation much like someone calling out 'amen' in a church service. Finger snapping expresses approval and affirmation of truth.

is putting into writing what had been preserved orally, either something he heard directly from Bamba or that others had heard. Therefore, we can take these words as Bamba's teaching to his disciples, fitting well with his overall strategy of moral and ethical education for the masses.

As I have shown using these two texts, Wolof cultural values influenced Bamba and influenced the way he interpreted and communicated to the aspirants who followed him, what was to become the Muridiyya way of practising Islam. Another significant influence upon him was his self-understanding of being the servant of Muhammad.

Figure 2.2: 'Seven Things are Better than Seven Things'
The circled text reads, '*laabiire mbooleem jullit moo gën fetal jihaar'*. Meaning, 'being generous to all Muslims is better than waging holy war'

2.5 Bamba's self-understanding as Servant of the Apostle

Bamba called himself *Khadimou Rassoul* (servant of the Apostle) and identified with the suffering of Muhammed in Mecca and his nonviolent response to opposition. An understanding of Bamba's nonviolence starts with his self-understanding as *Khadimou Rassoul*. He thought of all his writing and teaching as a service to Muhammad. He attempted to copy him in all areas of life including the organisation of his home and office, the number of scribes he had working for him (Ngom 2016:226), and the 'constitution' he created for the city of Touba.[27] Pirzada (2003) draws a carefully constructed analogy between Muhammad and Bamba, laying out the similarities between the two leaders' character and circumstances.

First, Pirzada describes the inner purity of Muhammad through a mystical event recounted by Abdul Qadir Jilani 'When he was only four years old two angels visited him. They opened his chest and took out his heart and removed a black muscle from it, and then washed it with celestial water and put it back in his chest' (Pirzada 2003:39). This inner purity, according to Pirzada 'enabled him to remain nonviolent'(Pirzada 2003:39) during years of suffering in Mecca. Likewise, he argues that Bamba's nonviolence in his sufferings should be understood in light of 'his pure nature, the original *fitrah* (original disposition) which had been preserved intact' (Pirzada 2003:40).[28]

Second, Pirzada contends that there is a similarity in circumstances. The impracticality of fighting an overwhelmingly superior force caused Bamba to seek other forms of resistance (Pirzada 2003:39). In Mecca, Muhammad could not fight back because the Muslim community was weak and would be defeated. Similarly, for Bamba and the Murids, armed resistance against the superior military force of the French was

[27] '"Matlabul Fawzayn" (Quest for Happiness in the Two Worlds [meaning this world and the hereafter]), a short poem of supplications he composed soon after discovering the land of Tuubaa; the Murids see this work as a sort of constitution for the holy city' (Babou 2007a:72).

[28] Pirzada is quoting Hamoneau, Didier 1999 Vie Et Enseignement Du Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba.: Maître Fondateur De La Voie 'Mouride' Beyrouth, Liban: Editions Albouraq (32-33).

futile. Pirzada goes on to argue that Bamba's closeness to 'the Prophet led him to imitate the methodology of the prophet by patiently building a community in similarly trying circumstances' (Pirzada 2003:39).

Pirzada's argument is vulnerable to a critique often levelled against Muslim pacifists, namely that patient nonviolence is a strategic move, a form of *taqiyya* (prudence), biding time until Muslims have the upper hand and can wield the sword. Detractors of Muslims who promote nonviolence argue:

> In the early years of Islam, since Muhammad and his community were far outnumbered by their infidel competitors while living next to them in Mecca, a message of peace and co-existence was in order … the standard view on Qur'anic abrogation concerning war and peace verses is that when Muslims are weak and in a minority position, they should preach and behave according to the ethos of the Meccan verses (peace and tolerance); when strong, however, they should go on the offensive on the basis of what is commanded in the Medinan verses (war and conquest). (Ibrahim 2010)

If Bamba had been practising *taqiyya,* one would expect that when Murids achieved power and wealth in Senegal, they would impose themselves by force. However, this has not happened. Murids make up approximately 30% of the population of Senegal and have achieved tremendous political power. There is no evidence that they have achieved this success by violent means or that they have used this power to impose their version of Islam in Senegal. Instead, a vigorous climate of interfaith co-operation marks most domains of society (Cochrane 2017:3). Bamba was genuine in his commitment to fighting the greater *jihad* and the betterment of his people. Farah Michelle Kimball (2009) makes the same argument that I make:

> Fighting against the superior military might of the French, was not considered the wise or viable solution … He did not want his people to get involved in bloodshed because he believed that the fight truly worth fighting, in this case, was the one against the base soul and the vices we harbour within. (Kimball 2009:91)

Third, Pirzada opines that Bamba's nonviolence was because he had 'reached a spiritual level whereby no form of violence could harm him'(Pirzada 2003:38). He says that Bamba's nonviolence was out of the certainty of divine protection such that nothing could harm him. Pirzada argues that Muhammad and Bamba were able to persevere in nonviolence in the face of extreme opposition and dangerous circumstances because they

had attained a spiritual level so high that nothing could harm them. This argument weakens the significance of Bamba's nonviolence; persevering in the face of evil and suffering is admirable if the danger is real, but uninteresting if there is no potential for failure. Consider the ancient Hebrew story of Daniel's three friends in the fiery furnace.[29] Without the real possibility of their burning up, there would be no story. Giving Bamba special protected status detracts from his achievements.

Pirzada's analysis is helpful because he brings a solidly Sufi Muslim argument to why Amadu Bamba chose the path of nonviolence, i.e. service to Muhammad brought him close to his mentor, and God graced him with similar purity. Linking Bamba's nonviolence to the nonviolence of Muhammad in Mecca is a critical element of understanding Bamba's nonviolence because, as Bamba records concerning a vision while in prison in Dakar, it was Muhammad himself who directed him away from violence.

2.6 The Prophet influenced him toward nonviolence

Walking in Africa Square, while attending the 2016 occasion of the Shaykh Amadu Bamba Days parade in Harlem, NY, I encountered a series of five-foot-tall posters along the sidewalk. Each one was titled 'Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba: A Muslim Peacemaker'. Each poster had pictures depicting Muridiyya history and quotations from Amadu Bamba's writings. Later, I obtained PDFs of the entire set of 53 posters. One of these posters has the following quote, 'Whenever I recall my stay in that [awful prison] they put me in, and the [misbehaviour] of that unfair governor, I feel like taking arms [to combat them]. But the Prophet himself dissuades me from (sic)' (Mbacké 2015:32). This remarkable quote comes originally from his poem *Djawab Abdu-l-Latif* and translated into Wolof in *Jazaawu Shakuur,* a poem by Musa Ka describing Bamba's sufferings in

[29] Daniel 3:1-30

exile.[30] In this poem, Ka describes Bamba's painful stay in a prison cell in Dakar, just before his exile to Gabon:

> It is on a Friday they threw him in a dark cell.
> And the enemies told him to touch [what was inside].
> He touched and found sharp knives and nails.
> They locked him up there and left him alone with God.
> He turned toward Mecca, raised his hands, and began his ritual prayers.
> He said he could not genuflect to pray because of pain.
> He read chapter two and three of the Qurʾān.
> Then Archangel Gabriel opened the door to honor the Qurʾān.
> He spent two nights there without food or drink.
> Except the divine light that sustained him, he did not drink.
> He said, on that day, he had a vision of Our Grandmother Jaara.
> She came to encourage him to persevere.
> He said, on that day, he had a vision of the Prophet.
> He entrusted him with unfathomable divine secrets
>
> Ngom's translation of 'Song of suffering in prison' from Musa Ka's poem *Jasaawu sakóor bu yoonu géej gi.* (Ngom 2016:129)

Ka's *Wolofal* poem details that he was in the cell without food or water for two nights, and that when he tried to do his prayers, he could not kneel because of sharp knives and nails in the cell. He finds encouragement in two visions: one of his mother Mame Jaara Bousso[31] and the other of the Prophet Muhammad. Ngom explains:

> While Bamba's two-day imprisonment in Dakar is construed as one of his most personally painful experiences, it is also presented as evidence that his nonviolent approach had deep theological motivations … To emphasize that armed struggle was prohibited for Bamba for religious reasons, Muusaa Ka notes that the episode in Dakar is the only narrative in which he thought about holy war against the injustices of his enemies. However, he clarifies that holy war would breach the terms of his primordial pledge before God and his pledge of suffering before the Prophet. (Ngom 2016:131)

It is in this story of suffering that I see Bamba at his most real. This experience reveals an understandable human desire to get revenge. Visions of his mother, who also suffered injustice during Maba's *jihad*, seem entirely plausible, as do visions of the one to whom he had pledged his service. Muhammad also suffered injustice and persecution when in Mecca. Seen from this perspective, it is not surprising that he says that the Prophet dissuaded him from violent *jihad*. This event influences Bamba towards nonviolence. He understands that his calling is to serve Muhammad and to make him his model in

[30] 'Dans "Djaza'u-sh-Shakur", Serigne Moussa Ka traduit en wolof versifie un passage de "Djawab Abdu-l-Latif" (la réponse a Abdou Latif) ou le Cheikh explique son choix…'(Dièye 1995:80).
[31] A Murid hero/saint in her own right. There is an annual pilgrimage in her honour in Prokhane, Senegal.

everything. For him, it is the model of Muhammad in Mecca, not the warrior of Medina, that he is to follow. Bamba was weak and suffering under the hands of his enemies. Therefore, it makes sense that visions of Muhammad, who also faced similar circumstances, shaped his response. Bamba sought to serve Muhammed and model his life's calling upon his mission of mercy to humanity.

2.7 Bamba's calling

One element that Murid hagiography develops is the idea that on the Day of *Alastu*, Amadu Bamba received a mission of nonviolence (Ngom 2016:45). In Wolof, the term is '*yawma Alastu* (Day of the Covenant), the day on which God's servants professed monotheism in a pre-existence(sic) covenant in the Qur'an' (Ngom 2012:7). Murid theology concerning this day goes beyond merely the profession of monotheism. Amadu Bamba's disciples understood his calling of *yërmande* (mercy) to be directly from God.

Recent translations of *Wolofal* poetry of the earliest interpreters and communicators of Bamba's message offer an understanding of the importance of the Day of *Alastu* for Murids. Ngom advocates for 'a timeless, overarching master-narrative emphasizing [Bamba's] partly predestined, partly earned sainthood and his efforts to become "the synthesis of many saints" who epitomised the virtues of numerous Abrahamic saints and prophets' (Ngom 2016:16). On the day of *Alastu*, 'God assigned him a special universal, threefold mission of *ràmmu* (intercession), *yërmande*, and *texe* (salvation in this life and in the afterlife) in the same way He chose prophets and saints from other peoples and races' (Ngom 2016:43). It is this mission of mercy that leads to an ethic of nonviolence: Bamba's mission of *yërmande* means that he is forbidden to fight back or spill the blood of his enemies. His calling demands nonviolence and requires that he overcome his adversaries by ethical and spiritual virtues (Ngom 2016:44). Bamba is a nonviolent saint partly because he was predestined to be so, and partly because of his effort and

perseverance in virtue. His mission is nonviolent because he is to 'bring mercy to humanity'.

The earliest Murid interpreters of Bamba understood that his calling on the Day of *Alastu* strongly influenced him towards nonviolence. The close association between his mission of *yermande* and Muhammad's mission of mercy to humanity[32] is key to this understanding. According to their writings, Bamba was nonviolent because God called him to this role and protected him. Bamba accepted his calling and persisted through all his challenges to live a life of nonviolence; Murids see this as a great victory. The next section looks at how a leader committed to nonviolence reads the Qur'an.

2.8 Bamba's exegesis of the Qur'an

Another way to understand the nonviolent influences on Bamba is to conjecture what sort of hermeneutic (West & Sitoto 2005:54) he brought to his reading of the Qur'an. Perhaps the most crucial and controversial aspect of debates about peace and Islam concerns the time of Muhammad and his companions. The debate is over whether the way they used "the sword" is normative for all Muslims for all times or exceptional, limited to them alone. 'Bamba opt[ed] …for a figurative and not a literal reading of this idealised period of Islamic history' (Wise 2017:kindle location 598). It is not possible to say if his reading of the Qur'an influenced him towards nonviolence or if his *a priori* commitment to nonviolence influenced his hermeneutic. I am inclined towards the latter, as his early initiation into the Qadiri order was through al-Hajj Kamara, who was originally from the Jakhanke clerical centre in Touba, Guinea. As already shown, he opposed violence, *jihad,* and slavery. Starting with his nonviolent commitment and reading the Qur'an with this hermeneutic, it became a source of nonviolence that influenced him and his teaching.

[32] The Qur'an calls Muhammad a mercy to humanity (21:107).

Mahmuud Ñaŋ's ʿAjamī text, "What is the Murīd Way?" which compares verses 9:111-112 with traditional Wolof ethical values, describes 'Bamba's doctrine or mission statement' (Ngom 2016:85). Although some people use these verses[33] to justify violent *jihad* against unbelievers:

> Bamba interpreted the two verses as sacred injunctions for Muslims to pursue ethical excellence in society … Murids believe [this] to be one of Bamba's most significant legacies: his effort to thwart militant interpretations of controversial verses by laying them out and clarifying their practical social implications. (Ngom 2016:87)

This understanding of Bamba's concern for the social implications of reading and interpreting the Qur'an reveals a community well-being hermeneutic. His own early life experience sensitized him to the cost of violence and the destruction it causes in the community. His Wolof values of *teranga* (hospitality) and *jàmm* emphasize the importance of preserving community well-being.

Ñaŋ's text suggests a Murid understanding that Bamba's nonviolence comes directly from his interpretation of the Qur'an. Ñaŋ demonstrates this by going to the Sura 9:111. Explaining this further Ngom says:

> All disciples of Bamba—the Murīd faithful, leaders, and disciples—are expected to be generous, even to their adversaries. This is because verse 111 is construed as a sacred mandate to demonstrate multiple forms of generosity in society. This interpretation of generosity derived from verse 111 contrasts sharply with its militant understanding. (Ngom 2016:88)

This focus on doing what is good for society is what I call Bamba's community well-being ethic. The focus is on the positive, 'what is good for society', instead of the negative 'fighting in the way of God' and 'killing and being killed'. Elsewhere Bamba ruled that fighting was only incumbent on Muhammad and his companions.

Amadu Bamba's hermeneutic of community well-being influenced him towards a nonviolent exegesis of the Qur'an that leaned towards peace and nonviolence and away

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[33] 'God has bought from the believers their selves and their possessions against the gift of Paradise; they fight in the way of God; They kill, and are killed; that is a promise binding upon God in the Torah, and the Gospel, and the Qur'an; and who fulfils his covenant truer than God? So rejoice in the bargain you have made with Him; that is the might triumph. Those who repent, those who serve, those who pray, those who journey, those who bow, those who prostate themselves, those who bid to honour and forbid dishonour, those who keep God's bounds—and give thou good tidings to the believers' (Qur'an 9:111-112).

from militant understandings of *jihad*. The next section looks at yet another influence upon him, that of the scriptural traditions of the other Abrahamic faiths.

2.9 Influenced by other Abrahamic faiths

There is little doubt that the 'Abrahamic faiths' (Ngom 2016:198–9) directly influenced Amadu Bamba. The Qur'an contains many references to Abrahamic faith, especially the prophets and significant persons of faith. In his poem, 'Sindidi'[34] Bamba names 18 prophets and two angels mentioned in the Bible. Murid hagiographic literature is full of stories about Bamba that resemble biblical stories. Ngom (2016) makes extensive reference to these influences. In the following paragraphs, I examine briefly the ways Abrahamic faiths influenced Bamba as well as the evidence for and against the idea that Bamba may have owned a Bible.

Paul Marty (1917) was the Islamic scholar-in-residence for a time in French West Africa, where he wrote extensively about Senegal, including the Muridiyya. During the time Marty was in Senegal, Amadu Bamba was under house arrest in Diourbel. Senegalese scholars and others critique Marty for his racism and lack of understanding of Bamba and the Muridiyya (Zito 2012:76). However, he remains an eyewitness, and his research offers significant insights. Marty surveyed the libraries of religious leaders in Senegal. He found seven leaders who had 'important libraries of 2-300 classical works of theology, grammar, logic and Arabic literature' (Marty 1917:56). The library of Amadu Bamba in Diourbel was in this group. Marty says that in addition to the classical works:

> The most diverse works: newspapers, pamphlets of all sorts … as well as Christian religious works (Old and New Testaments, complete or partial) due to missionary propaganda. The learned marabouts testify to the liveliest taste for this varied religious history which, in their belief, precedes and proclaims Islam. There they seek, as it were, titles of nobility; they eagerly soak up these marvels and mingle biblical

[34] M'Backe, Moustapha 1987 Sindidi A Prayer: The Most Perfect Prayer for the Body and the Soul New York: Khadimou Rassul Society Publications.

> ideas in their conversation and correspondence in significant ways. They draw by turns and with the most liberal spirit from Judaism, Christianity and Islamism. (Marty 1917:56)[35]

Serigne Sam Niang, head librarian at Daaray Kamil Library, Touba, contradicts this report saying, 'I have never found anyone, in the authentic written or oral record, anyone, who said that Sheikh Amadu Bamba kept the Bible in his library' (SEN2 2018).[36]

Marty writes about a bishop's visit to Amadu Bamba that he says he observed:

> Often missionaries, sometimes Catholics, sometimes Protestants, passing through the Islamized regions of the Colony, make a courtesy visit to Al-Hadj Malik, Bou Kounta, Amadou Bamba or Al-Hadji Nias and receive an excellent reception. Yesterday, Bishop Jalabert, apostolic vicar of Senegambia, went to see the pontiff of the Mourides, Amadou Bamba, who hurried to meet the prelate and piously kissed his episcopal ring. (Marty 1917:27)[37]

Serigne Sam Niang feels that Paul Marty is a hostile source,[38] in response to my question about this quote he replied, 'It bothers us a lot, Paul Marty has made a lot of accusations against Mouridism, for the purpose of destabilizing Mouridism' (SEN2 2018).[39] He rejects the assertation that Bamba would have greeted the bishop in this way:

> But to greet a bishop and to kiss his ring, I say 'No.' Anyone who knows Cheikh Amadu Bamba knows well that ... Did he even give his hand? Because he often refused his ... he often refused to shake the hand of someone who was against his. (SEN2 2018)[40]

In spite of Niang's opinion, historian Cheikh Anta Babou believes that Bamba probably did have a Bible, as did the other *shaykhs*. Shaykh Aly N'daw, the current head of the

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[35] My translation of 'les ouvrage les plus divers, des journaux, des brochures de toute sorte, … ainsi que des ouvrages religieux chrétiens (Ancien et Nouveau Testaments, complets ou partiels) dus à la propagande des missionnaires. Les marabouts instruits témoignent du gout le plus vif pour cette histoire religieuse si variée qui, dans leur croyance précède et annonce l'Islam. Ils y recherchent en quelque sorte de titres de noblesse; et leur empressement à s'imprégner de ce merveilleux et à mêler des souvenirs bibliques à leurs conversation et à leur correspondance est significatif. Ils puisent tour à tour et avec l'esprit le plus libérai dans le Judaïsme, le Christianisme et l'Islamisme.'

[36] J'ai n'a jamais trouver quelqu'un, dans des écrits authentiques ou bien verbal, quelqu'un dire que Cheikh Amadou Bamba a gardé le Bible dans sa bibliothèque.

[37] My translation of 'Souvent des missionnaires, tantôt catholiques, tantôt protestants, passent à travers les régions islamisées de la Colonie, font une visite courtoise à Al-Hadj Malik, à Bou Kounta, a Amadou Bamba, A Al-Hadji Nias et en reçoivent le meilleur accueil. Hier encore, Mgr Jalabert, vicaire apostolique de la Sénégambie, s'en allait voir le pontife des Mourides, Amadou Bamba, et celui-ci se précipitait à la rencontre du prélat et baisait pieusement son anneau épiscopal.'

[38] Alex Zito's dissertation: 'Paul Marty, who was in fact not an impartial sociologist but a French colonial intelligence officer, and whose primary motivations for research were the desires to locate and control dissidence and establish order.' (Zito 2012:76)

[39] Ça nous gêne beaucoup, Paul Marty il a fait beaucoup d'accuse au Mouridisme. Parce que c'est pour déstabiliser le Mouridisme.

[40] 'Mais pour saluer un évêque et faire un biseau dans sa bague, je dis 'Non'. Ce qui connaisse Cheikh Amadou Bamba, connaisse bien que... Est-ce qu'il a donné même sa main ? Parce que souvent il a refusé sa, souvent il a refusé donnais sa main a quelqu'un qui a contre son…'

order started by Abdoulaye Dièye also affirms this point of view, citing Bamba's familiarity with the Bible. [41] Bamba was part of a West African scholarly tradition well accustomed to drawing on multiple sources. Sufis are known to be eclectic readers and borrowers of ideas from many traditions and familiarity with the Bible was part of formulating a polemic. 'In some texts, Bamba criticized the belief in the trinity, but in line with Muslim theology, the critique was mostly directed to the Church as an institution but not to Jesus and his teachings as perceived by Muslims'.[42] If Bamba did have a Bible or a Bible portion (and perhaps other Christian literature) and was sometimes interacting with Christian leaders, it is reasonable to posit some direct biblical and Christian influences on Bamba apart from the internal sources found in the Qur'an and Islam. His poem about Mary, mother of Jesus, '*Fuzti'*, shows a familiarity with the story and in it he invited Muslims to take another view of Jesus. 'He teaches us that Jesus is the "most distinguished" and "most generous of prophets"' (So 2015:97–99). Bamba forgave his enemies, just like Jesus did, he taught and encouraged his followers to do the same. The Qur'an teaches forgiveness, but it seems that this may be an element of Bamba's life and teaching that was directly influenced by the New Testament. *Masalik-ul-Jinan* contains what may be a quote from 1 Peter 2:11, '[Just live in this world] as a foreigner in exile…' (Mbacké 2010:96). Next, we look at hagiographic accounts with biblical parallels.

A variety of hagiographic sources seem to indicate influences from both the Old and New Testaments. 'Reminiscent of the biblical figure Daniel,[43] Musa Ka wrote that in Dakar, the cleric was confronted by a hungry lion, which in his sight, "behaved like a lamb before its owner"' (Babou 2007a:138). In the New Testament, Jesus comes walking on water[44] to meet his disciples in a boat. In Musa Ka's epic poem,[45] 'Bamba laid out his

[41] Personal interview at his home in Pout, Senegal (August 2018)).
[42] Personal conversation with Cheikh Anta Babou 9 October 2019.
[43] Daniel 6:1-24
[44] Matthew 14:22-36
[45] 'Nàttoo di Kerkeraani Awliyāʾi (Suffering is the Price of Sainthood)'(Ngom 2016:124).

mat and prayed on the waves of the Atlantic Ocean when, on the ship transporting him to Gabon, he was prevented from fulfilling his religious duty' (Babou 2007a:138). These stories show Murid familiarity with biblical material,[46] thus making the idea of some Christian influences on Bamba plausible.

Besides these stories that are part of the original Murid mythology surrounding Bamba and the miracles about him, there are also more recent Sufi readings of his life and writings that link the essence of Bamba to Jesus. So (2015) says, 'he was a vessel of the light of Jesus and of the prophet of Islam. In other words, Jesus, the Prophet of Islam, and Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba are one and the same reality, light and essence' (So 2015:100). So draws this from his reading of '*Fuzti'* and 'The Crowning Achievement of Fervent Prayer'. Ngom concurs that in the narratives of Murid hagiography 'The similarity of Bamba's stories (the taming of the lion, and the forgiveness and prayers on water) to biblical ones (Daniel, Jesus Christ) in Murīd ʿAjamī sources reinforce the belief that Bamba is the embodiment of many saints' (Ngom 2016:137). Murids join themselves to the ancient traditions of the Abrahamic faiths by connecting Bamba, his virtuous life and his teaching to these traditions.

2.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have undertaken an extensive review of secondary literature, pulling together different sources to gain a fuller picture of the forces and factors that collectively influenced Amadu Bamba Mbacké towards nonviolence. The picture that emerges is of a gifted religious scholar who is responding to the circumstances of his time and place, and the influences upon him. His rejection of violence has its roots in his experience of the *jihad* of Maba and the consequences he suffered along with his family. He witnessed the

[46] Bamba may also have learned these stories via his reading of various *manaaqib* (biographical works celebrating the lives of famous Sufis across the Muslim world). There was significant cross-fertilization between Sufis and Christian mystics in the monastic traditions e.g. (Schimmel 2011:34–35).

ugly effects of politically motivated violence during his father's time in the court of Lat Dior and was revolted by it. His Sufi religious education and relational connections to the pacifist traditions of Suwarian Islam were strong influences upon him, the resulting practices of Murids everywhere bear its stamp. The best elements of his Wolof cultural values exerted an influence upon him such that he saw them as compatible with similar Islamic values. Murid hagiographic literature reveals to us Bamba's calling and his imitation of the Prophet as intimately connected with his mission of mercy for humanity that precluded the use of violence. The way that Bamba exegeted the Qur'an, using a community well-being hermeneutic also influenced him toward nonviolence. Another influential factor in his life was a significant connection to the other Abrahamic faiths.

These influences, when taken together show from whence came Bamba's impulses towards nonviolence. Contrary to common assumptions, not all Sufis are nonviolent or pacifist. Of the influences I scrutinized, perhaps no single influence was enough to make Bamba who he was, but rather I have shown that it was the combined power of these forces that shaped Bamba into a resilient and dynamic nonviolent leader. What I bring is a fresh analysis of the secondary literature with a special commitment to identify and name the influences upon Bamba. I see a confluence of forces from West African Islam, Wolof culture, and the Abrahamic faiths that combined with his personal, familial, and communal history to create a uniquely pacifist Sufi order. A contribution I make as a Christian researching the Muridiyya is to highlight the significant influence upon Bamba from Biblical material, asking questions that have not been asked before allowed me to bring to light this somewhat hidden influence upon Bamba.

In this chapter, I showed the substantial influences that collectively shaped Bamba's commitment to nonviolence. The next chapter looks at the ways these influences translated into practices, the ways his commitment to nonviolence appeared in his

writings and the way he acted out his pacifism in the face of significant opposition from Wolof and French opponents.

Declare your *jihad* on thirteen enemies you cannot see—egoism, arrogance, conceit, selfishness, greed, lust, intolerance, anger, lying, cheating, gossiping, and slandering. If you can master and destroy them, then you will be ready to fight the enemy you can see. —al-Ghazali[47]

CHAPTER 3: SHAYKH AMADU BAMBA'S PRACTICE OF NONVIOLENCE

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter Two, I explored the influences that undergirded Amadu Bamba's commitment to nonviolence. This chapter focuses on his lived practice resulting from his response to those influences. Using selected writings and what we know of his practice, I describe Bamba's form of nonviolence. Many sources reference Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi in attempts to identify Bamba's nonviolent leadership (SEN1 2018; SEN3 2018; Diagne 2017; Salzbrunn 2004; Abdullah 2009), but this is insufficient. My goal in this chapter is to excavate the foundations of Bamba's nonviolence. These foundations are accessible through the work of scholars like Babou (2007) who provides a historical narrative of Bamba's life and Ngom (2016) who opens internal sources written in *Wolofal* script. Multiple scholars writing about Bamba and the Muridiyya identify him as a nonviolent leader but I seek to illuminate his nonviolent practices in order to identify specific actions and activities that embody his nonviolence.

An understanding of these foundations will provide a framework to evaluate, compare, and locate his practice of nonviolence among other pacifist traditions. His nonviolent practice, although consistent throughout his life, was not without contradictions and exceptions. In this chapter, the primary lens for evaluating Bamba's nonviolence is his actions. A person's practice is identified by what they do in a specific social and physical condition (Bourdieu 1977:4). Using this lens avoids being trapped by discourses about Bamba and the Murids. His writing was one of the durable and

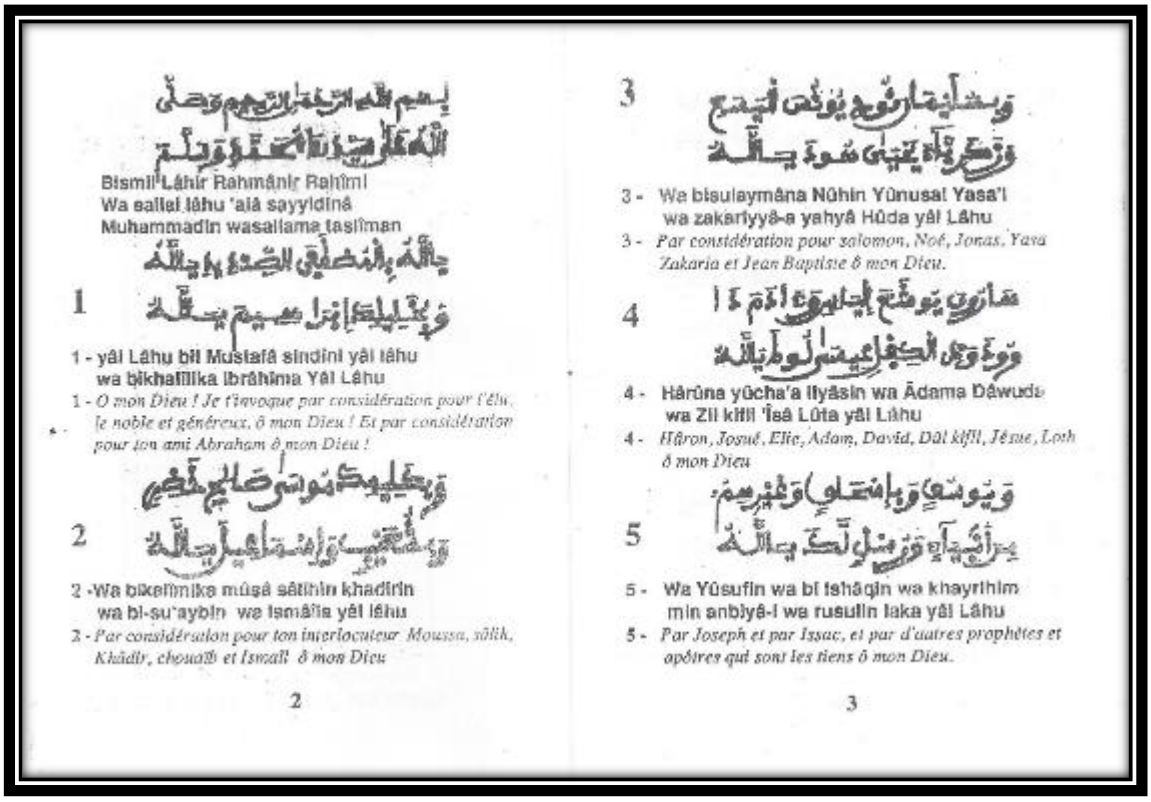
[47] As quoted in Shedinger, Robert F 2015 Jesus and *Jihad*: Reclaiming the Prophetic Heart of Christianity and Islam Cascade Books, an Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers (103).

influential elements of his practice, revealing the thoughts and convictions behind his actions. Before evaluating Bamba's actions, the following sections evaluate what he wrote about forgiveness, nonviolence, and *jihad*.

3.2 Nonviolence in Bamba's writings

Amadu Bamba's writings clarify his commitment to nonviolence, as well as providing a resource for his disciples. Professor Amar Samb, the Arabist and former director of IFAN at the University of Dakar, speaking about Amadu Bamba said: 'the founder of the Muridiyya has spent his whole life in writing' (Mbacke 2009:117). The selected works of Sheikh Ahmadu Bamba as collected by Aboul Aziz Mbacké and Lucy Creevey lists 99 titles (Camara 2017:202–205). When visiting the mosque and library in Touba, the librarian told me what Murids the world over would affirm, that the weight of his writings is more than seven tons.[48] Abdoul Aziz Mbacké (2015) divides his poems, books, and writings into ten categories: theology, Islamic law, Sufism, spiritual education, admonitions, remembrance and invocation of God's holy names, praising God, call for blessings on the Prophet, panegyric of the Prophet and pleas (Mbacké 2015:40). These writings, originally written in Arabic, are translated and published in popular, informal formats as well as in academic works.[49]

[48] Part of Murid hagiography.
[49] Camara, Sana ed. 2017 *Sheikh Ahmadu Bamba: Selected Poems* Leiden: Brill Academic.



Bismil Lâhir Rahmânir Rahîmi
Wa sallal lâhu 'alâ sayyidinâ
Muhammadin wasallama taslîman

1 - yâi Lâhu bil Mustafâ sindini yâi lâhu
wa bikhalîlika Ibrâhima Yâi Lâhu
1 - *O mon Dieu ! Je t'invoque par considération pour l'élu, le noble et généreux, ô mon Dieu ! Et par considération pour ton ami Abraham ô mon Dieu !*

2 -Wa bikelîmika mûsâ sâlihin khadirin
wa bi-su'aybin wa Ismâ'îla yâi lâhu
2 - *Par considération pour ton interlocuteur Moussa, sâlih, Khâdir, chouaïb et Ismaël ô mon Dieu*

2

3 - Wa bisulaymâna Nûhin Yûnusal Yasa'i
wa zakariyyâ-a yahyâ Hûda yâi Lâhu
3 - *Par considération pour salomon, Noé, Jonas, Yasa Zakaria et Jean Baptiste ô mon Dieu.*

4 - Hârûna yûcha'a Ilyâsin wa Âdama Dâwuda
wa Zil kifli 'Îsâ Lûta yâi Lâhu
4 - *Hâron, Josué, Elie, Adam, David, Dûl kifli, Jésus, Loth ô mon Dieu*

5 - Wa Yûsufin wa bi Ishâqin wa khayrihim
min anbiyâ-i wa rusulin laka yâi Lâhu
5 - *Par Joseph et par Issac, et par d'autres prophètes et apôtres qui sont les tiens ô mon Dieu.*

3

Figure 3.1: 'As Sindidu' purchased on the street in Harlem 2017 (Arabic, transliterated Arabic and French)

There are numerous Murid websites[50] dedicated to making the *xassaids* (poetry by Amadu Bamba written in Arabic) freely available to the public. Below I examine a short list of verses written by Bamba and commonly referenced by Murids in New York. This list is not complete, nor does an understanding of his nonviolence rest solely on these selections. What is remarkable about these verses is that his contemporaries did not write or think in the same ways. Out of the many thousands of verses written by Bamba, only a tiny minority explicitly express his nonviolent approach. The majority are concerned with more classical Sufi concerns, and educating his people; giving them dignity, helping them assimilate Islamic values and ethics into their Wolof cultural values and ethics. Bamba wrote during a time of distress, both the internal failures of Wolof society and the external stresses of the imposition of the French colonial power. Bamba invited Wolof

[50] For example: http://www.daaraykamil.com

people 'to embrace the Murid identity not as something entirely new or foreign, but rather as a spiritual renaissance which responded to the problems of the time' (Zito 2012:93). One dimension of this was his specific teaching on nonviolence, *jihad*, and how to relate to enemies.

One of the overarching themes of Bamba's behavioural ethics is doing what is good for the entire community. A verse from one of his most famous works, *Masalik al Jinan* captures this brilliantly: 'The best action is the kind that brings the most widespread benefit to society, like knowledge which helps to remove ignorance and to keep people away from mischief' (Mbacké 2015:21). Bamba's understanding of m*aqasid al-shariah*[51] led him to adopt 'What brings the most widespread benefit to society' as an organising principle for all his activities. He acted and taught in ways that he believed would best serve all the people in society. In that light and with consideration of what the consequences would have been if he had attempted to pursue violent resistance against the French; pushing his community towards peace and nonviolence while guarding dignity, was a masterful move.

3.2.1 Excerpts of Bamba's writings as used in a Murid poster display

Bamba's writings concerning forgiveness, nonviolence and *jihad* are at the heart of the public message that Murids present in New York. The posters series, *Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba: A Muslim Peacemaker* (Mbacke 2015), was created for the International Exhibition of Muslim Nonviolence at Columbia University 11-30 September 2015. It features prominently what the creators considered the most relevant verses from the Qur'an and Bamba's poems showing his contribution to Muslim peacemaking. The poster series is frequently on display at Murid events both public and private in New York, St.

[51] '*Maqasid'* has been defined by Jasser Auda as 'a purpose, intent, goal, end' and 'a purpose (*maqasid*) is not valid unless it leads to the fulfilment of some good (*maṣlaḥah*) or the avoidance of some mischief'(Auda 2008:2).

Louis, Atlanta, Washington D.C. and other locations. Limiting the extent of my analysis of Bamba's writings regarding peace and nonviolence to the verses found in this poster series matches with the scope of my overall project, the Muridiyya in New York. One of the editors of the series is a naturalized American citizen living in New York and a prominent member of the Murid community where he is often on stage at major events in a co-ordinating role. Here are the verses as portrayed in the series.

3.2.2 The leader of Muslim nonviolence

Under a picture of Amadu Bamba titled 'Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba: The leader of Muslim Nonviolence',[52] appear two verses:

> Some people have fooled themselves with the *Jihad* they wage against [innocent] human beings. They set themselves against their fellow creatures, assaulting them regularly only for the sake of fame and fortune. And they pretend to be spreading God's Word when in reality their only goal is to rise to fame. Not anything else. So they return with their troops from their 'holy wars' filled with sins and unrighteous deeds (Cheikh A. Bamba, *Masalik-ul-Jinan*).

> I have forgiven all my enemies for the Holy Face of God, who has driven them away from me. So never shall I try to avenge myself. I have forgiven all my enemies with full pure-heartedness (Cheikh A. Bamba, *Maqadiatul Amdah*).

The next poster, 'Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba: A Muslim Peacemaker: Jihad for Peace,'[53] displays a collage of images of Bamba, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., a New York firefighter, and a terrorist. It contrasts Bamba's perspective of peaceful relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims with the violent *jihad* of Al Qaeda, Boko Haram and ISIS. The poster features this verse:

> I wage my *Jihad* through knowledge and Ethical values, as a humble subject of God and a servant of His Prophet. While others bear weapons to be feared, my sole 'arms' are Knowledge and Worship. The true warrior in God's path is not he who kills his enemies, but he who combats his ego (*nafs*) to achieve spiritual perfection (Cheikh A. Bamba).

Amadu Bamba's *jihad* is the struggle to submit the soul to God. There is a *hadith* often associated with the Muridiyya that says, 'We have returned from the minor struggle (*jihad*

[52] Poster #2, In the 2018 Bamba Day parade a man carried a placard with this phrase, that I can only surmise came from the poster series.
[53] Poster #3

al-asghar) to fight the major struggle (*jihad al-akbar*)'[54] (Pirzada 2003:39). Murids embrace this struggle against the *nafs* (soul). These verses, along with others listed in Appendix 1, when taken together, show at the least a man committed to peaceful coexistence with all people. Or even, as New York Murids seek to portray him, a great Muslim peacemaker. His understanding of *jihad* continues to shape the way his followers put their founder's nonviolence into practice.

3.2.3 Bamba's *jihad*

Bamba launched his call for jihad during the era of *jihads* waged by Muslims in North and sub-Saharan Africa (including Sufis) to resist French colonial conquest. However, Bamba rejected violent or armed *jihad*. He located the urge for violent *jihad* in hubris and connects it with sin against peaceful humanity. 'Bamba taught that the mode of *jihad* of the soul, or the Greater *Jihad* … in the post-Prophet era has a fundamental ethical dimension and that it … entails a relentless personal struggle to eradicate *ràggi xol yi* (the sicknesses of the hearts)' (Ngom 2016:89). Although Bamba's *jihad* was internal and spiritual, the French never believed that Bamba's intentions were peaceful or that he had indeed rejected 'holy war'. In the popular narrative of the 19th century, the Sufi brotherhoods occupied the same place as modern-day Islamist movements. They constituted a peril (Philippon 2015:192). The French continued to believe he was a threat despite evidence to the contrary and despite Bamba's own attempts to describe his understanding of *jihad*. He wrote to a letter to them saying, 'If you say that I am making holy war, I completely agree. But I do it by science and reverential fear in God. The Lord par excellence is my witness' (Dieye 1995:80).

[54] Pirzada's note says, 'Cited in al-Ghazäll, Ihyg' `Ulwn al-Din, (Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, 1998) vol. 3, p.7. *Hadith* narrated by al-Bayhagi, and it is *daif* (weak) according to Al-' Iraqi's analysis.' The validity of this *hadith* is highly contested; ibn-Taymiyyah says it has no sources (al-Furqan p.44-5) and the Ahmadiyyas quote it freely.

3.2.4 Respect for all God's creatures

The next poster in the series, 'Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba: A Muslim Peacemaker: Respect for human beings'[55] displays excerpts from his prayers including, 'O Lord! Grant Your mercy to all Your creatures' (*Yā Rahman, Yā Rahim*), and:

> Spare me from ever harming Your creatures, be they living near me or afar, be they Muslim or Non-Muslims. O Lord! To whomever that is blaming me or who has offended me, forgive him and may he submit to you' (*Matlabul Fawzayni*).

The same poster continues with quotes from *Nahju* a poem memorised by students in the Murid Qur'anic schools in New York. Including a verse that says, 'The worst people are those who respond to offenses with other offenses' (*Nahju*).[56] The last verse on the poster says, 'Living in peace and feeling peace of mind are the best things in the world' (*Majmūha*).

3.2.5 Bamba rejected his followers' desire for armed resistance

The series of posters then chronicles the story of Amadu Bamba's life and the emergence of the Muridiyya in the context of the French occupation of Senegal. In, 'Sentence to Exile 1895'[57] they include his confession, 'Whenever I recall my stay in that [awful prison] they put me in, and the [misbehavior] of that unfair governor, I feel like taking arms [to combat them]. But the Prophet himself dissuades me from' (*Jazaawu Shakuur*). And the poster titled, 'New Threats 1903' tells of 'the resolve of thousands of his followers calling openly for armed resistance' and of Bamba's rejection of that course of action with these words, 'I am neither expecting any help from my friends nor do I fear any aggression from my enemies. I have placed all my trust in my Lord' (no reference).[58]

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[55] Poster #4
[56] Very nearly a direct quote from 1 Peter 3:9, 'Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you.'
[57] Poster #32
[58] Poster #35

Murids in New York draw on these verses that, although significant, are relatively few compared to his volumes on classical Sufi Islamic themes, and make the Muridiyya a unique Muslim community. These are the verses they use in crafting their public message, a message that non-Muslim New Yorkers might appreciate (see Chapter Seven). The entire corpus of Bamba's life and writings confirm his testimony about the kind of *jihad* he was pursuing. After analysing his writing promoting nonviolence, we now turn to his practice of nonviolence.

3.3 Shaykh Amadu Bamba: his practices of nonviolence

Amadu Bamba's life and practise demonstrate his commitment to nonviolence. A valid question of any writer or philosopher is, 'How are you putting this into practice in your own life?' If a person is living out their philosophy in a meaningful way, others will tell stories about their actions. There are multiple sources with stories of Bamba's life and activities: his writings, the government archival records and the stories of eyewitnesses as told in the popular hagiographic accounts of the *Wolofal* writer/singers and the *hadith*-style collection of his son and first biographer Bachir Mbacké. In this section, I explore Bamba's form of nonviolence by considering what he did, beginning with the villages he founded.

3.3.1 Founding Daaru Salaam and Touba

Amadu Bamba established villages in the undeveloped regions of Senegambia, in part to avoid conflict. Amidst growing opposition because of the large number of disciples he was gaining, Bamba moved to Mbacke-Bawol, his family's home village. There also he faced opposition and was given an ultimatum to submit or leave the village . He then founded Darou Salaam two kilometres away (Babou 2007a:68). As the number of

disciples and visitors increased, he also founded the village of Touba[59] in a relatively uninhabited region with little water and far from other population centres. When faced with severe opposition and conflict, Amadou Bamba chose to move away and start anew rather than fight or settle for some compromise. His form of *hijra* (migration) is similar to the response of other nonviolent groups, for example, the Mennonite communities in Russia who left prosperous farms in Ukraine and migrated to Kazakhstan, Canada, USA, Paraguay, and Brazil rather than compromise their faith (Krahn et al. 1989). Withdrawal from conflict and seeking new lands where a religious community can live in peace and educate its followers as they see best is a form of nonviolence often called non-resistance.

3.3.2 Emphasis on work, prayer, and education for the masses

Amadu Bamba's dedication to education for all, not just the elite, helped to build a peaceful society. Education, both spiritual and practical, is part of creating a healthy community, as was his concern for the dignity of the person and his rejection of the negative impact of racism. The system of education Bamba developed, the *daara tarbiyya,*[60] addressed these aims. Cultivating socially and spiritually healthy people, and offering them education and meaningful work, was part of creating, healthy nonviolent, peaceful communities. Bamba's commitment to teaching the masses shows the range of his nonviolent vision that encompassed both personal and communal activities. Bamba put the well-being of this community ahead of his own, as his actions at the time of his arrest show.

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[59] Today the second largest city in Senegal.

[60] *'Tarbiyya* is a holistic approach to education invented by the Sufis that goes beyond the mere transmission of knowledge and seeks to transform the whole being by touching the body, the mind, and the soul. It establishes a special relationship between the sheikh and his disciple, who is no longer a *taaleb* (student) but a *murid* (aspirant) on the path to God who surrenders his will to his master and gives him command of every aspect of his life. Tarbiyya requires from the aspirant a clear commitment to follow the sheikh's recommendations on all matters, temporal and spiritual' (Babou 2007: 63).

3.3.3 Action at the time of his arrest

Amadu Bamba avoided involving his followers in potentially violent conflict by turning himself over to the French far away from his village and followers. His actions at the time of his first arrest show concern for not getting involved in a violent conflict. He was summoned to St. Louis by the governor, but did not go because he had not 'received authorization from God to travel' (Ngom 2016:119). The governor sent troops to arrest Bamba under the leadership of Leclerc, the administrator of the district of St. Louis. Murid sources indicate that 'Bamba received divine instruction to go meet his adversaries' and on 'August 10, 1895… travelled from Mbakke-baari to Jeewol-Jolof to meet the troops sent to arrest him' (Ngom 2016:120). It was at a distance of 95km, thus keeping the armed troops far from his community and avoiding violent conflict.

At the time of his second arrest, there were false accusations that Bamba was stockpiling weapons and preparing a holy war against the colonizers. The administration responded by sending 150 *tirailleurs* (indigenous soldiers) and 50 *spahis* (French cavalry) to attack his village of Daaru Mannaan and arrest him dead or alive (Ngom 2016:168). Thousands of his followers called for armed resistance. But Bamba was able to avoid bloodshed by going to meet the force sent to arrest him, surrendering to them in Diourbel June 14, 1903 (Ngom 2016:168).

Bamba's actions in those tension-filled events demonstrated his resolve and commitment to nonviolence. Twice he chose to walk towards his enemies and surrender, rather than risk the confrontation of his loyal disciples and the armed soldiers. This nonviolent action led directly to his actions before the tribunal in St. Louis that sent him into exile.

3.3.4 Ñaari Ràkkay Ndar yi (The Two Prostrations of St. Louis)

Amadu Bamba's prostrations in front of the court were an act of nonviolent resistance. After his arrest in Jeewol-Jolof, Bamba was taken to St. Louis for trial:

> The first thing he did upon entering the room where he was to respond before the counsel to the accusation of plotting the violent *jihad* against the French, was to turn toward the direction of Mecca and the *qibla* (orientation towards Mecca) and pray two *rakat*. (Diagne 2017)

In his presentation on the philosophical hermeneutics of the 'two *rakat'* prayer, Columbia University philosophy professor, Souleymane Bachir Diagne offers two interpretations: the piety of a saint entrusting himself to God or a nonviolent action challenging the authority of the court (De Jong 2014:27) and affirming that God's authority is higher. Diagne says that the message to the court is two-fold. First, performing the prayer says, 'You are not the power to which I answer, only God is and has power' (Diagne 2017). The second message is the one implicit in the physical posture of prostration in prayer, which is total vulnerability to his enemies. He says: 'One could draw from the meaning of the spiritual experience of the Shaykh the notion that nonviolence is the philosophy and the attitude that transmutes vulnerability into force, harmlessness into power' (Diagne 2017). Prof. Diagne also points out what Amadu Bamba himself said about this experience:

> During that time on the island of Saint Louis I have been subjected to ordeals that I would never have evoked out of courtesy to the one most worthy of gratitude who is adored for love of his face. Those ordeals were a spiritual education from the living who dies not. He who exempted me from resorting to weaponry against the assassin (Jazaou Shakour). (Diagne 2017)

He says the last words of this quotation, 'He who exempted me from resorting to weaponry against the assassin':

> Clarify the meaning of nonviolence which is at the core of Shaykh Amadou Bamba's thought and spiritual experience. …the decision not to resort to armed struggle is not passive subservience to some greater force… [rather] nonviolence is [a] choice and [an] activity translated in action, both of God exempting his servant from armed struggle, and of the individual reining in the impulse to resort to violence. (Diagne 2017)

Bamba's choice of nonviolence and trust in God guided his behaviour as well as the kind of behaviour he demanded of his disciples. He also spoke against violence more broadly, as on one occasion he issued a *fatwa* (legal opinion) against violent *jihad*.

3.3.5 *Fatwa* against *jihad*

By writing a legal opinion against *jihad*, Amadu Bamba showed his rejection of violence against an oppressor. Babou writes that while in exile in Mauritania Amadu Bamba issued a *fatwa* concerning the *jihad* of Ma al-Aynin in northern Mauritania. He gave three reasons justifying his *fatwa*: first, no global caliph; second, the weakness of the *ummah*; and third, that the French did not prevent Muslims from practising their religion. He also included Qur'anic verses[61] about how to live as a religious minority, the way Muslims in Mecca lived: (Babou 2007:155). Here is the *fatwa*, translated from French:[62]

> I am determined to write a summary piece of advice to my Muslims brothers so as they do not embark upon wars and ponder over the effects of such things and not let Satan, partisan of chaos, deceive them and lead them to situations they will not be able to come out. Therefore, I say: O my Muslim brothers … do not get involved in this so-called *Jihād* which only would result in human losses and material destruction, not to mention the havoc it would wreak in the country. If you say [to me] that *Jihād* is prescribed by [Islamic] Law and by *Sunnah*, my response is that it was so in times and circumstances that are different from yours and for people who are different from you … we should treat Christians the way they were treated by Prophet Muhammad. They lived in a peaceful cohabitation without any hostility, nor contempt. (Seye 2013:57-58)

In this *fatwa*, Bamba refers to the French as the 'believers in the Trinity' (Babou 2007a:135). His life-long commitment to nonviolence and his concern for the consequences of *jihad* are evident in what he wrote. His counsel about how to treat Christians is quite remarkable considering the ways the French, whom he equated with Christians, mistreated Bamba. It is significant that Bamba draws his inspiration from Muhammed in Mecca. In Mecca, Muhammed was a persecuted prophet, in Medina a powerful statesman and military leader (Watt 1956; Watt 1960). It is during the Meccan

[61] The Consultation (42:48) and The Infidels (109:6).
[62] What is a bit odd is that we know that Amadu Bamba did not write in French, either this is a translation of a letter written by him that as yet has not been discovered or perhaps this is the only remaining evidence of the letter.There is some speculation that this is a forgery, but most researchers accept its veracity. See (Creevey 1979).

period that Muhammed sent his some of his followers to Ethiopia to seek refuge among Christians. Because he modelled himself after Muhammed in Mecca, Bamba helps Murids to embrace a Meccan dimension of Islam that promotes peaceful co-existence and mutual respect for Christians. This theme continues in the surprising offer of forgiveness Bamba made upon his return from exile in Gabon.

3.3.6 Forgiving Enemies

Amadu Bamba's forgiveness toward both Wolof and French enemies showed his trust in God and strengthened his nonviolent position. Murids link nonviolence and forgiveness; 'We are all about peace, nonviolence, and forgiveness,' said Imam Khadim Bousso the first time we met. One of Abu-Nimer's (2003) seventeen principles of Islamic nonviolence and peacebuilding is forgiveness. The Qur'an commands forgiveness (42:40, 24:23, 42:37) and God is invoked as merciful and as the one who shows mercy. Amadu Bamba dedicated his life to serving the Prophet Muhammad who demonstrated forgiveness toward enemies by forgiving the conquered residents of Mecca. It is as *Khidimou Rassoul* (Servant of the Apostle) that Bamba made this announcement, 'I have forgiven all my enemies for the sake of Allah, who protects me. I do not fight back or retaliate' (Mbacke 2010:12). Bamba's return from exile in Gabon is a victory. Forgiving his enemies following victory parallels Muhammad's victorious return to Mecca and subsequent forgiveness of his enemies. Bamba forgave all his enemies, both the French and their Wolof collaborators. Without forgiveness, it would have been impossible for Bamba to later move toward accommodation with the French.

3.3.7 Move towards accommodation with French

Amadu Bamba's move toward accommodation resulted from his commitment to nonviolence and a concern for the well-being of the entire community. The French began to recognize the economic benefits that the Muridiyya had created for the colony by their

peanut farming in the previously untamed interior regions of Senegal. Slowly they began to relax their opposition and mistrust towards Bamba. In Muridiyya studies of this period, roughly the last twenty years of Bamba's life, it is called the period of accommodation. Bamba's roots in the Suwarian tradition made it relatively easy for him to shift his stance as the French relaxed their opposition toward him. While in exile, in Mauritania, Bamba derived guidance for his relations with the French from Sura 42:15:

> Therefore call thou, and go straight as thou hast been commanded; do not follow their caprices. And say: 'I believe in whatever Book God has sent down; I have been commanded to be just between you. God is our Lord and your Lord. We have our deeds, and you have your deeds; there is no argument between us and you; God shall bring us together, and unto Him is the homecoming.' (Arberry 1996)

Babou contends, concerning this important shift in Bamba's stance towards the French, that 'By seeking inspiration from this verse, Bamba seemed to recognize the French as "People of the Book" … [and] …therefore, he believed that peaceful co-existence with the colonial administration was possible' (Babou 2007a:152).

The most important demand of the clerics in the Suwarian tradition is the freedom to practise Islam, land to farm and a place to build a home.[63] In Wolof society, these scholar-farmers were called *serigne fakk taal,*[64] and the Mbacké family was part of this tradition. Bamba found resources for peaceful relations with the French in his Wolof cultural background, his family heritage, his Sufi Suwarian orientation, and his interpretation of the Qur'an. These facilitated his gradual move towards accommodation and were expressed outwardly by his ability to redefine social and physical spaces, a cultural/religious gift that the Muridiyya steward.

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[63] 'Mbacké Bousso observed that in this regard, Amadu Bamba was following a long-established tradition of his ancestors. He notes that in their dealings with rulers, members of the Mbakke clan had always limited their demands to two things: first, enough land to build a house, a mosque, and a school and to farm and, second, the security needed to carry out their activities. This preoccupation with autonomy and security was at the core of the relationship between Muslim clerics and rulers in Wolof society. The quest for land and security was also, in Lamin Sanneh's view, the driving force behind the dispersal of the Suware scholarly diaspora' (Babou 2007a:164).

[64] 'The *serigne fakk taal* were peace-loving farmers who primarily relied on their disciples' labor and the support they received from local communities… [Who] benefited from the respect given them by the rulers, and they enjoyed political immunity' (Babou 2007a:25–6).

3.3.8 Creation of *daar al-murid* in *daar al-kufr*

The challenge for Bamba and his disciples was how to live as faithful Muslims in a society dominated by unbelievers:

> The Murid response to this challenge was the creation in eastern Bawol of a culturally autonomous sacred space, or *daar al-Murid*, in the *daar al-kufr* that Senegal had become. Spatial and cultural separation from the French, whether physical or symbolic, was crucial in building this Murid space. The establishment of *daar al Murid* was a deliberate undertaking spearheaded by Amadu Bamba and carried out by *sheikhs* and disciples. (Babou 2007a:174)

Bamba founded Darou Salaam and Touba before he was sent to exile in Gabon, both to pursue his educational goals and to avoid conflict. In Gabon, we know he marked out a 'mosque' or perhaps even built a mosque. While in Mauritania he started a school, and his disciples visited extensively. Under house arrest in Diourbel, he created his own private space, a compound within a quarter, a striking image of *daar-al-Murid* (house of Murid) amidst *daar-al-kufr* (house of unbelief). Creating a way to be a faithful Murid, while living in a context he considered polluted, allowed Bamba and his disciples to relate to the French, from a position of communal identity, belonging, solidarity, and peace. Peaceful relations were possible even when surrounded by the *daar-al-kufr*. Living *daar-al-Murid* amidst *daar-al-kufr* is a foundational element of Murid peacemaking, the foundation out of which Bamba was able to have a rapprochement with the French and out of which modern Muridiyya communities in the global diaspora can relate peaceably with a non-Muslim, non-Senegalese world. Chapter Four explores the ways Bamba's modern disciples draw upon this peacemaking foundation to make Murid space in New York. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to defining Bamba's form of nonviolence and peacemaking in comparison to other nonviolent pacifist traditions.

3.4 Locating Bamba and the Muridiyya among other peace traditions

In the last half of the 19th century, the Wolof people in Senegambia suffered decades of turmoil, internecine warfare, and *jihads* at the same time as they faced the French colonization of the Senegambia. It is within this context that Amadu Bamba was born and

the Muridiyya emerged as a nonviolent Sufi community. What kind of pacifist group were they and how are they similar to or different from other religious pacifist movements? A conceptual framework, facilitating comparisons of Amadu Bamba and the Muridiyya to other nonviolent leaders and movements is needed. Creating a framework showing how Islamic principles and practices of peace and nonviolence flow and mingle with other pacifist streams, assists me in answering the question, 'What kind of nonviolence did Bamba teach and practise?'

Pacifism and nonviolence are not identical, but they do 'refer to the common principles and practices of rejecting war and violence (nonviolence), regardless of whether it is motivated by spiritual, moral, cultural or political considerations' (Abu-Nimer 2003:16). Abu-Nimer (2003) shows that it is theologically possible for Muslims to find in the Qur'an, *hadith* and *sunna*, Islamic principles of nonviolence and peacebuilding. Yoder (1992) describes the classical positions of Pragmatic Pacifism and Absolute Pacifism, along with many intricate variations. Stassen (2008) shows that justice is a concern of many traditions and that by focusing on practice instead of principle, co-operation in interfaith and pluralistic contexts becomes easier. Yoder and Abu-Nimer point out that for Christians and Muslims, principles are intended to shape practice. My goal is two-fold: first, to locate Bamba and the Muridiyya within the classical categories of pacifism and second, to use Stassen's Just Peacemaking model to evaluate the practices of Bamba and the Muridiyya historically as well as the practices of the Murids in the diaspora of Harlem, NY. To begin, I first look at some root theological and anthropological understandings that shape how Christians and Muslims respond to violence.

3.4.1 Responses to violence: The story of Cain and Abel

The primal myth of Cain and Abel offers a starting point for people of Abrahamic faiths to discuss the problem of violence. Two major contributors to the study of peace and

nonviolence start by reflecting on violence using the story of Cain and Abel. From a Christian perspective, John Howard Yoder (2009) begins with this story as found in the book of Genesis; from a Muslim perspective Mohammed Abu-Nimer picks up this story, as told in the Qur'an.

In Genesis, the story focuses on Cain and God's intervention to prevent a spiral of violence, while the Qur'anic story highlights Abel and his righteous refusal to lift his hand against his brother (5:28). Yoder shows that rather than divine intervention to protect humanity from murders, 'Yahweh acts to protect Cain against the primaeval vengeance he has every reason to fear' (Yoder 2009:28). In Genesis 'the very first reference to the rest of humanity is "whoever finds me will slay me"' (Yoder 2009:28). Yoder gives a primaeval definition of violence: 'that there are people out there whose response to Cain is mimetic. They will quasi-automatically, as if by reflex, want to do to him what he had done to Abel' (Yoder 2009:28). Anthropologically, Yoder follows the arguments of Rene Girard that the primal solution to violence is the suffering of an innocent victim. Biblically, the answer to violence is the cross, 'every major strand of the New Testament… interprets the acceptance by Jesus of the violence of the cross as the means, necessary and sufficient, of God's victory over the rebellious powers' (Yoder 2009:32). Towards the end of his analysis of violence, Yoder sums up saying, 'What is wrong with violence is that what is violated is a creature of the sovereign God' (Yoder 2009:38).

Abu-Nimer's approach is different, as his source materials require. His reference to the story of Cain and Abel follows an analysis of three broad categories of Muslim scholarship on issues related to peace and violence in Islam. Although there are significant differences between these scholars, they all '[justify] the restricted use of violence under certain strict conditions' (Abu-Nimer 2003:38). Abu-Nimer does not address the primaeval anthropological roots of violence, nor does he define violence. His goal is to show that in the Qur'an and Islam, there are resources upon which to build an

Islamic theory of peace and nonviolence. He calls the story of *Habil* and *Qabil* (Abel and Cain) 'a parable of nonviolence' (Abu-Nimer 2003:44). 'Abel represents justice and righteousness… Cain represents aggression and the readiness to kill on any pretext' (Abu-Nimer 2003:44). The Qur'anic story focuses on Abel's righteousness and Cain's lostness. There are two *hadith* that emphasis the righteousness of Abel and admonish Muslims to be like him: 'Be as the son of Adam!' and 'Be as the best of Adam's two sons' (Abu-Nimer 2003:44).

Abu-Nimer only engages the story of Cain and Abel as concerns the righteous nonviolent response of Abel to his brother's violence. Whereas Yoder looked at the primal roots of violence in humanity, something biblical theology facilitates, Abu-Nimer limits his analysis to Abel and the hadith that exhorts Muslims to "be as the best of Adam's two sons." Both authors reference the story of Cain and Abel, and although they use the material differently, they both acknowledge that violence and appropriate response to violence is a critical starting point for understanding nonviolence.

3.4.2 Responses to Violence: Three alternatives

The previous section examined two ways of understanding the nature of violence using the story of Cain and Abel. This section outlines three historical responses to violence: an embrace of violence as normative, a conditional response depending on motive, or a rejection of violence as intrinsically evil. The three alternatives are quite distinct from each other; however, the many variations of how these responses are lived out in the world can be quite complex with many overlapping elements. Words like pacifism, justice, nonviolence, peacemaking, and non-resistance are used differently by different traditions. Often the definitions are somewhat fluid. This section attempts to map out the various traditional responses to violence and define the terms.

One response to violence is to embrace it as a way of life. Many empires have taken this approach. Constant warfare on the borders of an ever-expanding territory (Roman

and Ottoman empires, Vikings, Tamerlane, Genghis Khan) was embraced for many centuries by a wide variety of cultures. With the Colosseum, the Romans ritualised this embrace of violence. The warrior/hero and the gods became synonymous. Modern examples of this embrace of violence might include Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, or ISIS. The unsustainability of such an embrace of violence leads to the second alternative.

Conditional use of violence that includes restraint would describe how most peoples and philosophies in the world, both today and throughout history, answer the question of violence. This response says that motive is what matters because violence is, in and of itself, neutral. When violence is used to protect the vulnerable and to establish a just society, then controlled use of violence is for the greater good. Pragmatic pacifists accept that the quest for peace sometimes depends upon the use of force. From this perspective naturally flow ideas about self-defence, which taken on a societal scale, lead to the Just War perspective, the principles and conditions under which war is acceptable. Some modern philosophers emphasize neighbourly love as one of the core principles of Just War theory (Ramsey 1961; Long 2018). But I find their arguments problematic because love of neighbours is bound to the teaching of Jesus wherein even enemies are neighbours and killing my neighbour is antithetical to the teaching of Jesus.

The third type of response regards violence as intrinsically evil in and of itself, utterly incapable of good. The traditions, whether spiritual, religious or humanistic, sharing this perspective divide between those who remain engaged with the world and those who choose to separate themselves from the world. The sectarians 'perceive earthly realities as polluted with evil. Peace will not take place on the earth but beyond it. 'The most that can be done is to create communities of peace that are "living the life of the new age already", and strive to keep the secular world outside their communities' (Abu-Nimer 2003:13). Some traditional Mennonites and the Amish would fit in this category. Bamba's initial attempt to create villages in the wilderness fits this type. An

understanding of nonviolence as non-resistance also tends to put groups in this category. However, not all absolute pacifists disengage from the world.

Absolute pacifists may also engage the world, offering a nonviolent witness that is concerned with justice. They may see their engagement with the world as bearing witness to an alternative way to live and relate to others. Persons with this perspective will draw on the spiritual and ethical teachings of their faith. Christians such as the Anabaptists (Mennonites, Quakers, Brethren, early Waldensians) understand nonviolence as obedience to Jesus. From the Islamic faith, the Ahmadiyyah is an example. In the Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain traditions, the idea of *ahimsa* was made well-known by Gandhi. Stassen points out that most Jews, since the time of the prophet Jeremiah, have adopted nonviolence. Nonviolent teaching and practices include strategic nonviolence, nonviolent resistance, and nonviolent action.

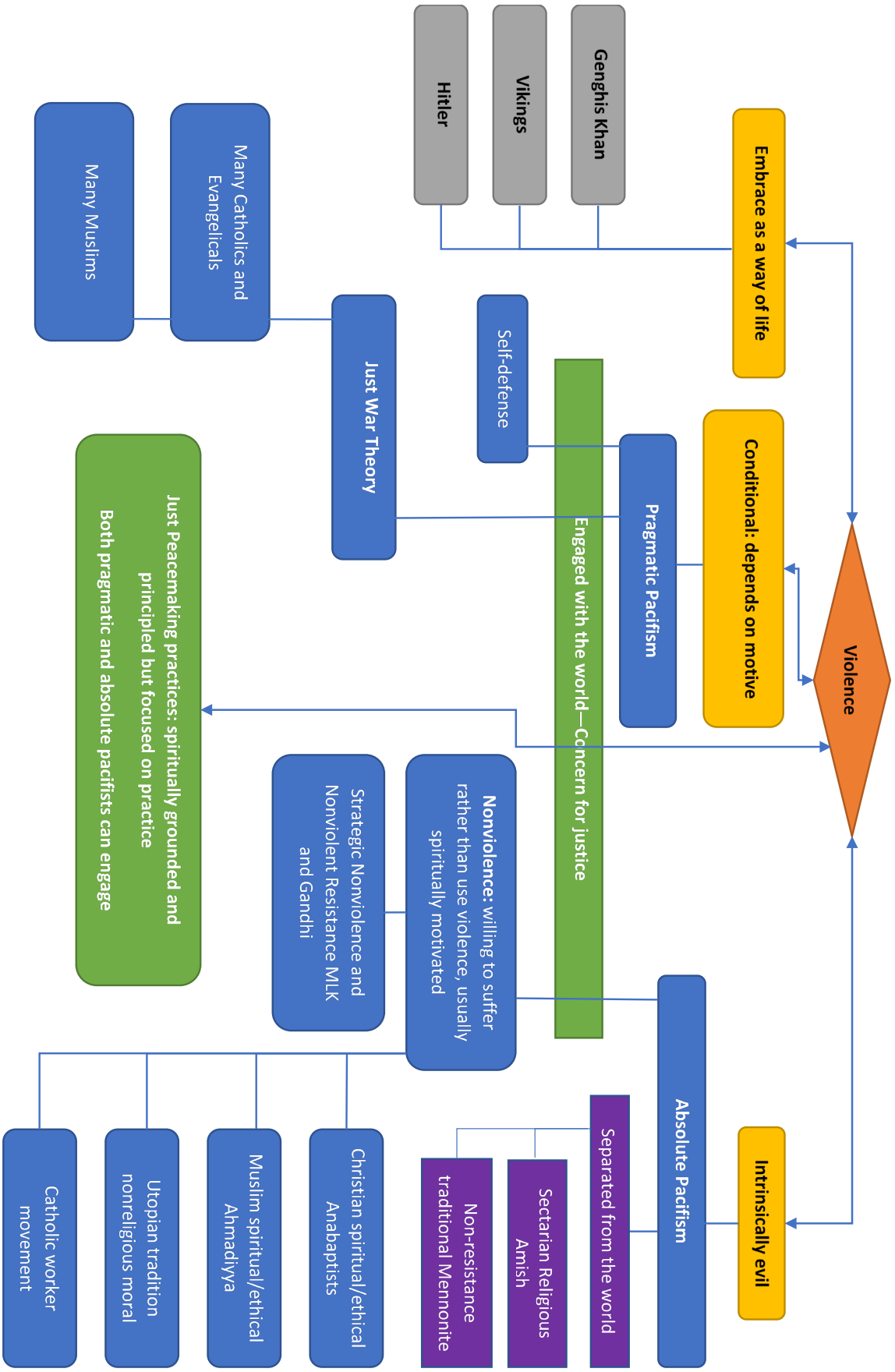

Figure 3.2 Three responses to violence

3.4.3 Just Peacemaking: A fourth alternative response to violence

Although based in principle, Just Peacemaking[65] provides a fourth alternative by focusing on practices[66] that will lead to peace. It combines the best parts of the Just War and Pacifist approaches by focusing on practices. Just Peacemaking is spiritually grounded and principled, emerging originally from Christian roots in biblical concerns for justice and the nonviolent way of Jesus. It is an approach formulated for the public square, comfortable in a pluralistic and interfaith world. Jewish and Muslim scholars,[67] drawing on their texts and traditions have also affirmed the practices of Just Peacemaking.

Pacifist and Just War perspectives rely on each other, sharing the goal of a peaceful world. Both work to slow down the movement towards war. However, both have been relatively ineffective in achieving these goals (Yoder 1996). Just Peacemaking engages earlier; not so much a question of 'war or no war' as much as co-operative action to prevent the conditions that lead to violence. It is a theory 'that can function effectively in inclusive public ethical discussion with people of varieties of faiths, based on reason and experience' (Stassen 1992:93). Because he clearly emphasises that these practices are for public discourse in a pluralistic society and inter-faith discussions of peacemaking, Stassen's ten practices of Just Peacemaking offer a theoretical framework for evaluating the practices of Amadu Bamba and the Murid community in New York.

Just Peacemaking's dual concern of peace and justice, married in practice, fits nicely with Muslim concerns for justice as expressed by Abu-Nimer. He says that the first concern of a Muslim or Islamic principle of nonviolence and peacebuilding is the 'pursuit of justice' (Abu-Nimer 2003:18). Huda quoting Ibrahim Kalin explains, 'peace as a

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[65] Glen Stassen Ten practices (Stassen 2008).
[66] 'A practice is neither an ideal or a rule, but a human activity that regularly takes place and that a sociologist could observe' (Stassen 2008:354).
[67] A group of thirty Jewish, Christian and Muslim scholars and peacemakers (including Stassen and Abu-Nimer) met in 2008 affirming that their respective traditions offer basic support to the Just Peacemaking practices. Abrahamic Alternatives to War (Thistlethwaite & Stassen 2008).

substantive concept is also based on justice, peace is predicated on the availability of equal rights and opportunities' (Huda 2010:8). Constructing a framework for evaluating Murid nonviolence requires an understanding of the full range of Islamic perspectives on peace and nonviolence. The next section outlines some of the Islamic principles of nonviolence.

3.4.4 Islamic responses to violence

Muslims can find Islamic principles and practices of nonviolence in the Qur'an, *hadith*, *sunnah*, and Islamic traditions. Abu-Nimer's critical survey of existing literature identifies three broad categories of scholarship on issues related to peace and violence in Islam. The first category focuses on war and *jihad*: 'This group argues that Islam is a religion of war and that violence is an integral part of the Islamic religion and tradition'. They see radical violent *jihad* as an integral part of Islam. These 'studies usually focus on fundamentalism and the recent emergence of radical Islamic movements' (Abu-Nimer 2003:25).

A second category includes studies of Just War and peace: these scholars start with the assumption that Islam is a religion that upholds peace and justice. They see *jihad* as one way of supporting peace and justice. They start from the premise that humans are God's agents on earth, fundamentally good, morally innocent and free from sin. Although people have the capacity for evil and disobedience, it is human nature to live in peace and harmony. A Muslim is someone who surrendered to God's will; this surrender is the only way to obtain peace. Because societies do not fully submit to God's will, Muslims must be prepared to fight to preserve Muslim faith and Muslim principles. For these scholars, Islam cannot be absolutely nonviolent; Muslims are commanded to fight evil and protect the good. These scholars developed sets of conditions to guide the use of force (Abu-Nimer 2003:26–7).

The third category of scholars concentrates on peacebuilding and nonviolence from an Islamic perspective. These scholars focus 'on core Islamic values that provide the basis for articulating the essential premises of active nonviolence such as Justice ('*adl*), benevolence (*ihsan*), compassion (*rahmah*), wisdom (*hikmah*), service ('*amal*), faith (*yakeen*), love (*mahabbah*), consultation (*shurah*), independent judgment (*ijtihad*), and consensus (*ijma'*) (Abu-Nimer 2003:37). In limited cases, violence is justified in Islam, but they emphasize that Islam is a source for nonviolence. Like the scholars in the other two categories, they would agree that pacifism, in an absolute sense, without consideration of justice, cannot accurately reflect Islamic teachings.

Abu-Nimer says the scholars advocating peacebuilding and nonviolence from an Islamic perspective build their paradigm around some critical observations. They observe that the historical context has changed and that spreading the faith by violence is no longer possible. There has been a change in the status of the Muslim community today, as worldwide, many Muslims live as minorities. Global interdependence renders the use of violence impractical. Weapons of mass destruction mean that there are no ways to ensure limits on violence. Their observation, sharply contested by critics (Durie 2019) is that the use of violence was a minority element in the life of the prophet, the Qur'an, the Hadith, and Islamic tradition; therefore these should be viewed as sources of nonviolence. These scholars look primarily to the Meccan period (610 to 622 CE) for inspiration about nonviolence. They also consider the Qur'anic story of Cain and Abel (5:27-28). They note three Muslim communities who practise nonviolence: Maziyariyya, Sufis, and Ahmadiyya (Abu-Nimer 2003:39–45).

Abu-Nimer draws from the work of Abulaziz Sachedina[68] to create a set of Islamic principles of nonviolence and peacebuilding. Drawing primarily on the Qur'an and the

[68] Sachedina, Abdulaziz 1996 'The Justification of Violence in Islam' in JP Burns ed. 1996 *War and Its Discontents: Pacifism and Quietism in the Abrahamic Traditions* Georgetown University Press. And, 2007 *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism* New York: Oxford University Press.

Hadith, he presents seventeen principles. He starts with the pursuit of justice, that 'a major call of Islamic religion is to establish a just social reality' (Abu-Nimer 2003:49). He cites many passages from the Qur'an like, 'Surely God bids to justice and good-doing' (16:90). Justice is defined as to straighten, fix, amend, run away from wrong, equalise, and to balance. The Qur'an demands just action (4:36, 4:58, 5:8, 60:8) and calls for resistance to injustice.

Abu-Nimer goes on to develop the other principles of Muslim nonviolence, for example, a 'Quest for Peace' in the Qur'anic injunctions to shun violence and aggression (5:64, 16:90, 23:96). Peace as the outcome of full submission to Islam. Looking at the *sunna* of the prophet in Mecca, Abu-Nimer notes that violence was a last resort, that Muhammad chose nonviolent resistance while Muslims were a minority.[69] He says that the focus is on patience and steadfastness while suffering. Abu-Nimer sees a Muslim peacemaking resource in the much-loved story of the placing of the Black Stone during the rebuilding of the Kaba, where Muhammad placed the stone on a robe, and the clan leaders lifted it together.

Abu-Nimer develops a total of seventeen principles of nonviolence[70] and peacebuilding that parallel Stassen's 'Ten Practices of Just Peacemaking', although of somewhat different types when lined up beside one another convergences appear (see fig. 3.3). Following further discussion of the nature of Amadu Bamba's practice of nonviolence, a third column will be added to the chart allowing comparison across the three categories.

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[69] This idea of choosing nonviolence when oppressor is too strong to fight against is troublesome. This same theme appears in the literature about Amadu Bamba, that considering the overwhelming strength of the French, nonviolence was the only option, see Pirzada (2003). This begs the question, 'What course of action would Muhammad or Bamba taken if they were stronger?' History reveals that Muhammad in Media, with superior force, did use violence to rule.

[70] See (Abu-Nimer 2003:49–78), all 17 are listed in figure 3.3.

Ten Practices of Just Peacemaking	Islamic Principles of Nonviolence
Support nonviolent direct action	Deeds and Actions
Take independent initiatives to reduce threat	Creativity and innovation Involvement through individual responsibility and choice
Use co-operative conflict resolution	Peacemaking Patience Knowledge and reason
Acknowledge responsibility for conflict and injustice and seek repentance and forgiveness.	Forgiveness
Advance democracy, human rights and religious liberty.	The universality and dignity of humanity The sacredness of human life Equality Pluralism and diversity
Foster just and sustainable economic development	Social empowerment (*khayr*) by doing good (*ihsan*) The pursuit of justice
Working with emerging cooperative forces in the international community	A quest for peace
Strengthen the United Nations and international efforts for cooperation and human rights	The *ummah*
Reduce offensive weapons and weapons trade	
Encourage grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary associations	Inclusivity and participatory process Collaborative actions and solidarity

Figure 3.3: Comparing 'Just Peacemaking' (Stassen) and 'Islamic Principles of Nonviolence' (Abu-Nimer)

3.5 The Nature of Amadu Bamba's Nonviolence

Placing Amadu Bamba in this conceptual framework of peace and nonviolence requires balancing his practices with those he allowed for his disciples. One must also place this in the context of Islamic requirements because Bamba and the Murids are sometimes at pains to remind critics that they are faithful Muslims. Bamba is a Muslim, dedicated to serving Muhammad and teaching from the Qur'an, *hadith*, and *sunnah*. In this regard, he holds to standard Maliki[71] teaching (Pirzada 2003:8). He is a pragmatic pacifist and

[71] 'School of law attributed to Malik ibn Anas al-Asbahi in the eighth century. Characterized by strong emphasis on *hadith*; many doctrines are attributed to early Muslims such as Muhammad 's wives, relatives, and Companions' (Esposito 2003).

supportive of standard Sunni just war theory (similar to Christian Just War theory). Considering Abu-Nimer's categorisation of Muslim perspectives on nonviolence, peace, and war, Amadu Bamba is solidly in the third category. He is among those who 'focused on core Islamic values that provide the basis for articulating the essential premises of active nonviolence' (Abu-Nimer 2003:37).

When looking at Bamba's personal life, his ethics, behaviour, and teaching (his practice), he might be placed in the category of absolute pacifism, much like MLK, Gandhi, many Anabaptists or the Catholic workers' movement. For these groups, nonviolence comes out of their spiritual and moral principles and their commitment to engage the injustices in the world, even if it involves suffering. Like them, Amadu Bamba was willing to suffer for his principled practices of nonviolence. This type of nonviolence engages in the real world on behalf of the poor and the powerless. Theoretically, Bamba was a standard pragmatic pacifist because that is what Islam requires. Practically, in his personal life and practice, he was an absolute pacifist of the type that is involved in the real world. He had a personal ethic of absolute nonviolence. Murid theologians say that God forbade Bamba from violence.

Comparing Bamba's practices of nonviolence to Stassen's ten practices of peacebuilding does not yield an exact fit. But there are enough congruencies to say that the nonviolent practices I have identified in the life of Amadu Bamba have resonance with the practices of Just Peacemaking as described by Stassen. For example, from the Ten Practices of Just Peacemaking take the first item 'support nonviolent direct action' many actions of MLK in the civil rights movement were of this nature. Compare this to 'deeds and actions' as part of the Islamic Principles of Nonviolence and Peacebuilding. Islam teaches that Muslims are rewarded for good deeds and right actions, particularly enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil. A Muslim is to act, but if they are unable to take action, they are to at least speak out. This is quite similar to the 'nonviolent

direct action' and to Bamba's action in the court in St. Louis where he used his body in prayer to protest the injustice of his situation.

Ten Practices of Just Peacemaking	Islamic Principles of Nonviolence	Bamba's Practices of Nonviolence
Support nonviolent direct action	Deeds and Actions	Two prostrations prayer in St. Louis courtroom
Take independent initiatives to reduce threat	Creativity and innovation Involvement through individual responsibility and choice	Actions at time of arrest Creation of *dar al-muridiyya* within *dar al-kufir*
Use cooperative conflict resolution	Peacemaking Patience Knowledge and reason	Accommodation with the French
Acknowledge responsibility for conflict and injustice and seek repentance and forgiveness.	Forgiveness	Forgave his enemies
Advance democracy, human rights and religious liberty.	The universality and dignity of humanity The sacredness of human life Equality Pluralism and diversity	*Fatwah* against jihad Emphasis on prayer, work and education for the masses
Foster just and sustainable economic development	Social empowerment by doing good (*khayr and ihsan*) The pursuit of justice	Working farms (*daara trabiyya*)
Working with emerging co-operative forces in the international community	A quest for peace	n/a
Strengthen the United Nations and international efforts for co-operation and human rights	The *ummah*	n/a
Reduce offensive weapons and weapons trade	n/a	Did not own or stockpile weapons
Encourage grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary associations	Inclusivity and participatory process Collaborative actions and solidarity	Later, Murids adopted the *dahira* a successful form of voluntary association

Figure 3.4: Comparing Bamba's practice of nonviolence to Stassen's Just Peacemaking practices and Abu-Nimer's Islamic Principles and practices of peacebuilding

Throughout this chapter, I make the case that Bamba, in his writing and his lived life, was a person whose practice matched his rhetoric. A majority of the evidence seems solidly in favour of this conclusion; however, there is also evidence that contradicts this argument. Before my conclusion, this evidence must be examined.

3.5.1 Contradictions: Bamba endorses violence in some instances

There are some complications or even exceptions to Bamba's nonviolence. Murids are allowed to serve freely in the armed forces. Bamba's writings include support for the death penalty as the consequence of apostasy. Another complicating matter is that Bamba's nonviolence is sometimes construed as a practical necessity since the French were overwhelmingly powerful. Another complication is that Murid hagiography says Bamba's nonviolence was because God protected him in such a way that no one could harm him, thus had no need to defend himself and was able to live in a nonviolent way. Breaking these expectations and complications down one by one is the subject of the next paragraphs.

3.5.2 Military Service

In 1911, as WWI loomed on the horizon, the French began conscripting soldiers in West Africa and 'the Murids, with the approval of Amadu Bamba, helped the colonial administration recruit at least four hundred soldiers' (Babou 2007:254). Murids in the diaspora wrestle with this apparent contradiction. In a paper[72] presented at the annual MICA conference held in the UN General Assembly Hall, July 28, 2018, Mourtala Mboup offered a penetrating analysis of this moment in Murid history. He asked pointedly, "Is the Shaykh's doctrinal pacifism reconcilable with active military duty?" Mboup went on to contextualise this as part of the fight for the rights and dignity of the Senegalese people in colonial Africa. Saying that this was Bamba's (and the other Murid leaders, notably Shaykh Ibrahima Fall) rejection of the Ottoman empire's choice to side with the Germans, even issuing a *fatwa* declaring the German cause a 'holy war', a *jihad*. By sending troops to help their oppressors (the French), the Murids sent a powerful

[72] This lecture delivered in French at the UN was translated by Djiby Diagne and published in the 2019 edition of the Shayk Ahmadou Bamba Cultural Weeks magazine.

message on multiple levels: even though you oppress us we help you, we reject the immorality of holy war for political ends, and we are fighting for our rightful place as citizens within Afrique Occidental Française (AOF). Murids who were part of the *tirailleurs* also fought in WWII. Military service is common for Murids in Senegal. One of my informants gained his American citizenship by serving in the Army Reserve, which can often be a fast track for immigrants to gain citizenship. Supporting military service puts Bamba in the category of pragmatic Just War pacifism. It also is part of standard Islamic teaching to obey rulers, even unjust rulers. Bamba's nonviolence does not extend to the state. He, like many Christian pacifists, separates his commitment to nonviolence from the duty of the state to wield the sword. Absolute Pacifists reject this argument yet understand that those who hold it are also attempting to interpret scripture faithfully.

3.5.3 Punishment for apostasy

Another exception to Bamba's nonviolence is his teaching about apostasy. He wrote several works specifically for the education of children, actively used in the two Murid Qur'anic schools in Harlem. At the MICA school the teacher holds classes on Saturday and Sundays, with students divided into two groups, older and younger. She teaches the Qur'anic recitation, as well as how to read and write in Arabic. She learned this from her father, an Islamic scholar/teacher in Senegal. She said she also teaches manners and comportment. When asked, 'What, precisely, you teach?' She replied 'it comes from the Qur'an and *waxi Serigne* Touba (sayings of Amadu Bamba), specifically *Tazawudu-c-Cighar* (Provisions for the Youth)' (DSM8 2018). *Tazawudu-c-Cighar*, which she has memorized, was written by Amadu Bamba explicitly to teach youth the Islamic pillars of belief and practice, and the elements of proper behaviour. She stressed:

> The teaching of Amadu Bamba is for everybody. Violence does no good. If I respond to your bad behaviour in a way that makes you not want to do bad behaviour again, you won't harm others. It's our responsibility to educate our community and teach them to be trustworthy. (DSM8 2018)

She also showed me how to find a copy of *Tazawudu-c-Cighar* online, in the original Arabic, as well as translations in French and English.

The English translation of *Tazawudu-c-Cighar* is 17 pages double-spaced and divided into three chapters: Chapter I: The Profession of Faith (*Iman*) covers the pillars of belief. Chapter II: Practices of Worship (*Islam*) covers the pillars of duty and specific instructions for ritual purity. Chapter III: Spiritual Perfection (*Ihsan*) focuses on behaviour, manners, and comportment. Chapters one and two are standard Islamic teaching, while chapter three has a definite Sufi bent. Relevant to this discussion of nonviolence is that Amadu Bamba spells out the punishment for apostasy:

> Know that the Five Prayers are Canonical Obligations – [so that] you may be guarded from mistakes ... This is according to the Holy Book and the Prophetic Tradition as well as the Consensus [of the Scholars]; thence any who deliberately gives up observing them ... out of a spirit of negation, is held as an apostate (one who repudiates his faith); he will be given three chances to repent in accordance with the Islamic Law [implemented in a Muslim Community]
>
> He will be left alive if he repents; otherwise, he will be put to death by the sword in conformity with the Messenger's Legislation
>
> Peace and Blessings be upon him, upon his Family and his clear-sighted Companions (Daaray Kamil n.d.). [73]

Bamba goes on about the details of the punishment and its application, ending with an acknowledgement that he is quoting ‘an opinion is expressed by Imâm Al 'Awfî’ (Daaray Kamil n.d.). In this poem, designed for teaching children, the fear of punishment is a motivation for being faithful in the duties of Islam. From any perspective outside of Islam, executing someone for not practising religious obligations is a clear violation of human rights. From the standpoint of peace and nonviolence, this is a glaring contradiction. Bamba forgave the French (guilty of many crimes against the people of Senegambia), yet advocated death for apostasy in a poem crafted especially for teaching youth.

[73] Bamba was reiterating here established cannons of shari’a law. Many of his books are commentaries on classics, mostly authored by medieval Muslim scholars in the Middle East and North Africa.

One informant told me that he understands this as Bamba passing on the truth of what Islam is, not as evidence that this is what he believed[74]. Many of his works are versifications of older (and less accessible to ordinary people in Bamba's day) works. He combined and synthesised them into shorter, easier to understand poems, making Islam available to ordinary people, not just to the elite. My informant confirmed my observation that I did not recall ever hearing of Murids enforcing this punishment. However, it does make one ask what pressures are applied to Murids to 'keep them in the fold'? This threat of violence, transmitted as part of what Amadu Bamba intentionally passed for the education of children, violates Bamba's commitment to forgiveness, peace, and nonviolence.

3.5.4 The impracticality of fighting the French

Pirzada argues that Bamba was nonviolent because of the impossibility of fighting the French. Linking his nonviolence to the unlikely success of other means, makes his position similar to that of Muhammad in Mecca who, 'practiced a nonviolent resistance that was reflected in all his teaching during that period (Meccan), when Muslims were a minority and under threat' (Abu-Nimer 2003:42). Epistemologically, this motivation, while perhaps practical, remains troubling because the implied message is that violent means might have used if the circumstances were favourable.

3.6 Conclusion

To answer the question, "What kind of pacifist was Amadu Bamba?" I sought evidence by excavating the foundations of his life and practice of nonviolence. To locate his practice within the larger circle of other pacifists and nonviolent religious communities I found it necessary to create a theoretical framework. The framework I created rests on

[74] Field note from discussion with MICA5, 18 March 2018.

understanding Muslim and Christian responses to violence using the primal story of Cain and Abel as a starting point. Three basic views of violence were identified: normative (to be embraced), conditional (good or bad, depending on motive) and intrinsically evil. The responses of different religious communities and leaders based on their views of the use of violence were grouped and charted in Fig. 3.2 in parallel with Stassen's Just Peacemaking alternative which backgrounds principle in order to focus on practice. This framework allowed me to evaluate Bamba's practice and locate him and the Muridiyya among other religious communities. I found that his personal and communal ethics matched well those of other absolute pacifists except that as a Muslim he must allow for the use of force to protect the *ummah*. In this regard, Amadu Bamba was a pragmatic pacifist.

In his personal ethics, he was an absolute pacifist who understood his time and place and worked for the well-being of his people during a time of crisis. The combination of practical realism and an idealistic Sufi vision to 'eradicate *ràggi xol yi* (the sicknesses of the hearts)' (Ngom 2016:89) enabled him to make a remarkable impact on the Wolof people. His writings and those of his close early followers show evidence of his commitment to nonviolence and his practice bears this out. He put his commitment to nonviolence into practise as revealed by his founding of centres of learning in isolated places rather than be involved in conflict. By going to meet those sent to arrest him, he protected his followers from a potentially violent confrontation. His vulnerable act of praying in the courtroom was an act of nonviolent resistance. By writing a *fatwa* against violent *jihad*, he made a public statement of his rejection of violent politics and his willingness to co-operate with Christians. By publicly forgiving his enemies he opened the way for future relationship and co-operation with the French, and he gave his disciples an example that many continue to follow. By finding a way to create Murid space within

the colonial town of Diourbel he initiated a pattern that migrant Murid communities reproduce wherever they go.

Bamba lived in a time of social and political turmoil and physical violence stemming from both internal and external forces. His life story reveals that he put into practice an Islamic spiritual and ethical commitment to nonviolence. For him, it was not just an idea, but something he acted out with his body, for example walking to meet those who would arrest him and send him into exile in Gabon. Around the world in Murid diaspora communities, this is the example that his disciples follow. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Murids moved into the most violent and economically depressed neighbourhood of New York, Harlem. By following the teaching and example of their founder, they put into practice the most basic elements of being a peacemaking community: mutual support/aid, prayer, courage in the face of danger, improving the local economy,[75] and a spiritual/ethical commitment to nonviolence. Some of them lost their lives driving gypsy cabs,[76] but as powerless people on the margins with a spiritual commitment to trusting God as the one who brings justice, they did not seek revenge. This example from recent Murid history in Harlem shows that Muslim immigrant communities have contributed to American well-being in the past and that they have a positive role to play in the future.

No community is perfect, and no leader is without contradictions. As noted, Bamba's commitment to nonviolence includes complicated even contradictory elements, particularly his writing about the punishment for apostasy and failure to undertake canonical prayers. Describing the ways this historic commitment to nonviolence is lived out in the life of Muridiyya diaspora in New York is the subject of the remaining chapters.

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[75] Many women opened hair-braiding salons (Babou 2013), small stores and an African market were opened.

[76] Taxis operated without proper licensing

There is no place that is not haunted by many different spirits hidden there in silence, spirits one can 'invoke' or not. Haunted places are the only ones people can live in–and this inverts the schema of the Panopticon (De Certeau 1984:108).

CHAPTER 4: MURID SPACE: A SPACE FOR PEACEMAKING

Figure 4.1: *Magal* celebration at Salem United Methodist Church, Harlem, NY

4.1 Introduction

The church sanctuary reverberated as the *kurel* (choir) from Daara Ji *masjid* sang *xassaids.* Around the room were large images of Murid caliphs on the altar table and all around the balcony as well as against the two pulpits. At the front was a large image of Bamba leaning against the foot of the cross in the apse. The benches had large print pew Bibles through which some people leafed. In the gymnasium, some were performing *wacc kamil* (reading of the entire Qur'an) and many others were partaking in *du'a* (prayers of supplication). NST members served Senegalese food in the gym and the fellowship hall. The major elements used to transform this Christian church building into Murid space[77] were the iconic images and sound. The clothing of the women in magnificent robes and headdresses and the men in their *boubous* (Senegalese robe) and hats also contributed to the transformation. Careful attention was paid to entrances (people move slowly and gracefully), greetings and seating arrangements. In addition, the festival food and Café Touba, the performance of *wacc kamil*, the private reading of *xassaids* and the Qur'an all help to transform a Christian place into a Murid space. This ability to transform any place temporarily into Murid space allowed them to feel at peace in strange, even hostile, places. It enables them to live comfortably within and interact with a pluralistic world.

The ways Bamba created Murid space within French colonial Senegal offers a model for his disciples in Harlem who, sometimes mirroring and other times departing from his pattern, respond to their American context. In this chapter, I outline the tactics for making Murid space. These tactics have worked well, yet some obstacles are too great to overcome, and others force adaptations. Murid space making creates sharp boundaries.

[77] In this chapter and throughout the remaining chapters, I follow De Certeau (1984) and his use of place and space, strategy and tactic to describe ways people relate to power. Rules of place are determined by governments and corporations and controlled by strategies, people on the margins create space for themselves within those places through tactics.

Participation in community life ranges from fully engaged to non-participation and for some converts even exclusion. One convert told me that Murids do not know how to spread the blessing of Bamba. 'They keep it all to themselves and don't really have space for others' (MCM16 2018). Also in this chapter, I highlight the difference between claiming another's place for yourself and creating space within the place of the other. Despite these challenges, Murids persist in creating Murid space in Harlem creatively finding ways to express themselves and live according to their values. In the next section, I show how my observations fit into the literature on making Murid space, a subset of a more extensive body of literature on Muslim space in migration.

4.1.1 Transforming Space

Wherever Murids migrate they seek to recreate Touba, the city founded by Shaykh Amadu Bamba, symbolic centre of the Murid physical, social, and spiritual universe. Writing about Murids in France, Bava (2003) says, 'It is from Touba or through Touba they [the Murids] seek direction, blessing or a miracle, but it is in Marseille that they reorganise their religion.'[78] This observation connects the central importance of Touba and the reality that new contexts require new ways of living their faith. Murid migrants have been successful in recreating ways of being Murid outside of Senegal, faithfully holding on to the core elements of their Sufi order while at the same time innovating as they respond to new contexts. An early example of this was in the early 1980s when they appropriated the Tijaniyya practice of the *dahira* (circle group), now a central feature of Murid communities, to meet the needs of Murids who migrated to Dakar looking for work (Diop 1981:79).

[78] C'est de Touba ou via Touba qu'ils attendent le chemin à suivre, la baraka ou un miracle, mais c'est à Marseille qu'ils réorganisent leur religion (Bava 2003:151).

Several researchers, drawing upon the concept of 'Muslim space' (Metcalf 1996), have described the way Murids in the diaspora re-create Touba or create 'Murid space' (Ebin 1996; Diouf 2000; Bava 2003b; Salzbrunn 2004; Riccio 2004; Robinson 2004; Babou 2007b). Ebin describes the use of limited physical spaces available to itinerant traders and the ways they shape that space. She identifies three essential features of creating Murid space. The first is to 'bring Touba' into the present space using symbols. Second, 'being numerous' in the same location is important, eating together, doing *zikr*, and sharing everything is the 'foundation of their invisible house' (Ebin 1996:107). Third, making a separation between sacred and polluting categories. Another element of this creation of Murid space is their 'ability to sacralise space through ritual' (Riccio 2004:937).

Visiting and interviewing one of my Harlem informants at his home in Touba offered the opportunity to observe uses of space in Touba, the second-largest city in Senegal. His family courtyard included several families living together in a tight courtyard. He gave me a tour of the central mosque and other symbolic sites, including some of the houses and tombs of *shaykhs*, and the library full of Bamba's writings. I also learned about sacred and polluting categories, for example, no shoes are allowed anywhere within the walls surrounding the central mosque or the fact that there are no hotels for non-Murids in the city, one must go to a nearby town[79] on the highway. These elements are replicated in Harlem in crowded subdivided apartments, with large posters of the holy sites and the Murid caliphs. Rolled out prayer rugs and temporarily sacralised rented halls become the sacred spaces of Touba, all part of how 'they constantly create space through their presence' (Ebin 1996:108).

[79] Mbacke, on the outskirts of Touba, permits all the things forbidden in Touba: alcohol, smoking, non-sacred music, football, and the hotel called: Campement Touristique de Baol.

This mix of bringing Touba to New York and innovating to fit the local context makes Murid space a translocal space. This translocal space is neither in Senegal nor in the diaspora, rather it is an imagined transnational community existing in the hearts and minds of Murids everywhere. There is a circular flow between New York and Touba, ideas and practices brought to Harlem experience adaptations caused by the local context; and these adaptations are then returned to Touba by video chats and travellers. Salzbrunn (2004) analyses the 'complex interaction between Senegalese inside and outside their country, their translocal networks and their connections to the local situation in New York City' (Salzbrunn 2004:468). She argues that understanding how migrants organise themselves within the translocal space is just as important as knowledge about their customs in the homeland. Salzbrunn describes how intimate knowledge of the local context helped Murids find their place in the public sphere of Harlem, enabling them to present an image comprehensible to Americans. Salzbrunn shows how inhabiting the local changes the way Murids express their faith and simultaneously restructures the local territory, creating the local rooting of a translocal network (Salzbrunn 2004:399). As an example, consider how in the early 1990s, Murids contributed to the regeneration of Harlem, including ‘the renovation of abandoned, dilapidated storefronts by Africans’ (Abdullah 2010:146). Their presence helped transform a dangerous neighbourhood, and at the same time their remittances enabled family members to build homes in Touba (Salzbrunn 2004; Lo & Nadhiri 2010; Dramé 2015).

For comparison, D’Alisera (2004) describes the ways Sierra Leonean Muslims in Washington D.C. use material culture to ‘write’ in public places. Using taxis and apartment doors as ‘canvasses’ for displaying religious iconography and symbols, or praying in public places, are common strategies for creating Muslim space in a secular city. For her, 'ritual, sanctioned practice, and narrative, together consecrate and sanctify Muslim space, inscribing meanings onto spaces that are not formally consecrated or

architecturally Islamic' (D'Alisera 2004:108). In the next section, I use Michel De Certeau's work on space-making as a conceptual framework to describe the ways that Amadu Bamba created Muslim space within French colonial Senegal, which becomes a model for how Murids create 'Murid space' in the diaspora.

4.1.2 Creating Murid space: Amadu Bamba in French colonial Senegal

Michel De Certeau (1984) conceptualizes[80] 'place' as different from 'space'. 'Place' is controlled by those with power, whether business, government or institutions, who define its boundaries and claim ownership of it. 'Place' is guarded and controlled by 'strategies' where everything has its fixed position and rules that govern its use. 'Space' on the other hand, is created by people's actions as they move through the 'place of the other'. By 'the place of the other' I am referring to De Certeau's description of his desire to bring into the light the tactics of persons who are dominated by those with the power to discipline them (De Certeau 1984:xiv). The powerless use 'tactics' to negotiate their movement through place, and their movements create new spaces (De Jong & Murphy 2014:40). De Certeau draws upon Foucault's description of the techno, military strategies of control (the panopticon) and Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* which he considers as an invisible all-controlling strategy (De Certeau 1984:45–60). De Certeau gives people more agency, recognising that they push back against controlling strategies with tactics. He is shaped by his Jesuit Christian understandings, particularly a concern for marginal groups (De Certeau 1984:xii).

De Certeau's theory helps me to conceptualise the ways in which Murids inhabit the spaces they create in New York, even as the strategies of the place constrain them.

[80] (Gieryn 2000) uses the words space and place in an almost opposite manner from De Certeau. Yet in a sense, is communicating something quite similar. For Gieryn, 'place is space filled up by people, practices, objects and representations' (465). I like that De Certeau, a Jesuit, carried a concern for the people of the margins, the poor and powerless, the voiceless. Because he worked from this perspective, I have chosen to follow his conceptualization of lieu and espace, stratégie and tactique.

The *habitus* with which they do this is a product of their Senegalese Murid origins and their position in American society. The formation of a Murid *habitus* began in the person of Bamba and in his methods of educating disciples in the *daara*.[81] Included in this *habitus* are dispositions of work as worship, entrepreneurial spirit, travel to gain knowledge, and as will be developed below, the many ways of creating *daar al-Muridiyya* (house of Muridiyya) in *daar al-kufr* (house of the unbelief). This *habitus* has undergone transformations as Murids responded to the changing context of post-colonial Senegal and now again in the diaspora communities in Africa, Europe, and North America. Before looking at the movements and tactics of Murids in New York, I explore the origins of these tactics in their founder's encounter with the French.

The late 1880s, when Shaykh Amadu Bamba and the Muridiyya emerged, was a violent time of colonial conquest and internecine warfare among Wolof kingdoms. Bamba's earliest impulse was to reject political involvement[82] and seek to create communities physically separated from the place controlled by the Wolof kings or the French. Accordingly, he founded new villages (Darou Salam and Touba) as places to pursue his writing and the education of his disciples. Alarmed by his increasing popularity, the French saw Bamba as a potential threat and sent him into exile first in Gabon, then Mauritania and finally kept him under house arrest in Diourbel until his death in 1927. The ways that Murids in New York create Murid spaces is rooted in how Amadu Bamba created *daar al-Islam* (house of Islam) in Diourbel, where he was confined against his will for fifteen years. Bamba's situation in Diourbel is similar to the situation of Murids in Harlem, where they are learning to live among non-believers. As Babou describes it, 'The dilemma that Bamba and his disciples were facing, then, was how they

[81] A combination of practical and spiritual education combining Qur'anic studies, farming and trades depending on the ability of the disciple.
[82] At his father's death he rejected an offer to take his place as Qadi in the court, years before he had any disciples.

could live the life of virtuous Muslims in a land and environment polluted by the French presence and control. Was it possible to make room for *daar al-Islam* within the *daar al-kufr*?' (Babou 2007:163). Bamba created *daar al-Muridiyya*[83] in three domains.

First, Bamba is the only black African to found a Sufi order. He aimed to create a positive space of dignity for black people[84] and this idea continues to hold creative power for his followers. Second, by acts of nonviolent resistance he created a new social space at his trial. Within the courtroom, in front of those who would judge him, Bamba's first action was to perform two *rakats* of the formal prayer.[85] *B*y the movement of his body, a tactic of the powerless, Bamba created a Murid space that belonged to God within the courtroom (Diagne 2017). Third, while confined to house arrest in Diourbel, Bamba succeeded in creating *daar al-Murid* within the *daar al-kufr.* He renamed the quarter allotted to his community, "*al-Buqahat al-Muburakati*" (Blessed Spot). There he built a private compound for himself, began celebrating Muslim festivals, and populated the quarter with his disciples (Babou 2007:165–166). Bamba's tactics involved movement and action within the 'place' under French colonial control, thereby creating Murid space.

The ways that Bamba created Murid space within the place controlled by the French offers a model to his disciples in the diaspora, a way of living as Murids in any situation. Nothing about this nonviolent lifestyle required power or control over place. The next section will show the ways that disciples in Harlem created Murid space; the movements and the tactics they employ in both everyday life and during special events.

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[83] In Murid studies, *daar al-Muridiyya* is a special case of *daar al-Islam* (house of Islam).
[84] Bamba expresses this in one of his most well-known poems, *Masãlik-ul-Jinãn*: 'And never be dissuaded from holding this book in due regard by my belonging to the black race. For [as quoted from the Book] the most honorable human being before GOD is who that fears HIM the most, without any possible doubt, So black skin does not imply insanity or ill understanding' (Mbacké 2010:31). This quote was also featured in poster exhibition done for a conference at Columbia University (Mbacké 2015).
[85] One *rakat* equals one cycle of the Muslim prayer ritual performed five times each day.

4.2 Creating Murid space in Harlem

Murid spaces are temporary, in that they only remain as long as there are Murids moving within that space. This chapter opened with a description of the symbolic transformation of a Christian church building into Touba, for the few hours of the *Magal* celebration.[86] On another occasion, I went to the general assembly of the Ndawi Serigne Touba (NST) *dahira*, a new movement among Murid youth. They met in the storage room behind the corner store in Harlem. This room is also used as a *masjid* during the week and a Qur'anic school on the weekends. None of these are officially sanctioned or registered uses. The bathroom does not meet the requirements of a public gathering place, and the numbers gathered inside would break occupancy rules for a room of its size. However, this does not matter to the community gathered inside, for their activity transforms the place intended for storage into a sacred space, a space of hospitality, learning and beauty.

During two years of fieldwork in Harlem, I catalogued the many different tactics that Murids use to create a space for themselves in the city. I identify six major types and a total of 33 different tactics. The tactics Murids use to create space come from their *habitus*. In one way or another, all their tactics involve the use of the body (or their collective bodies) and its movement. According to De Certeau, it is the movement of people through 'place' that creates 'space'. Activity, movement, bodily actions, bringing bodies into proximity, these movements are a participation in creating Murid space. The body is the weapon and text of the powerless and 'the body can be seen as the main tool of young people' (Diouf 2003:10) to gain agency and to shift the balance of power in their communities. The movements of the powerless create 'space' in the 'place' of the powerful. These movements and the spaces they create are invisible to outsiders, or if sometimes their movements are observed, incomprehensible. Murids collectively

[86] The *Magal* is an annual celebration that draws two million Murids to Touba to commemorate the day Amadu Bamba was sent into exile in Gabon.

perform specific messages to present themselves in ways that the people of New York can accept: as nonviolent, hardworking entrepreneurs, known as 'good Muslims and good blacks' (Kane 2011:229). These things are not end goals, but rather the outcomes of their commitment to *liggéeyal ngir Serigne Touba*[87] (work for Serigne Touba) to attain paradise in the two abodes.[88]

The tactics for creating Murid space include these categories: bringing Touba, participation in events, sacralising place, the body as text, moving the body, using the voice, and procuring a *Keur Serigne Touba* (house of the Lord of Touba). Collectively, choreographed by a Murid *habitus*, these become creatively powerful, offering a 'range of possible actions' (Eisenberg 2007:2046) for creating Murid space in the 'place of the other' even as the place employs strategies to restrain and control them.

4.2.1 Bringing Touba

Shaykh Mame Mor Mbacke[89] makes annual visits to Harlem. The bodily presence of the *shaykh* amidst his *talibés* (disciples) creates Murid space. He is the presence of *Serigne Touba* manifest. Wherever he goes, and whenever he speaks, Touba is actualised. When the *shaykh* is not present, images of Amadu Bamba and the Murid caliphs (his physical descendants) achieve a similar purpose. These images have the power to 'offer well-being, peace, and a sweetness of the spirit' and 'contribute strongly to … calm social tensions' (Roberts et al. 2003:58). The presence of the *shaykh* in person or iconically is one way of bringing Touba into the locale. The presence of the *shaykh* is but one of many Murid tactics for creating Murid space, sharing food and drink is another.

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[87] Serigne Touba is an honorific title for Shaykh Amadu Bamba.
[88] *Liggeey ngir Serigne Touba* (work for Lord Touba), refers to the notion that Murids see their entire life as part of their work, their spiritual quest. Christians can understand this best from the perspective of 'But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well' (Matthew 6:33).
[89] The official itinerant shaykh for Murid diaspora communities all over the world.

Senegalese hospitality includes generosity in giving away free food and drink to guests at celebrations; this is practised on a grand scale in Touba when two million people gather to celebrate the *Magal*.[90] In Harlem, it is a way of 'bringing Touba'. Following the 2017 Bamba Day parade, the crowd migrated to St. Marks United Methodist church basement and filled the blocked off-street. Awnings were set up, and mats rolled out, surrounded by chairs. After midday prayers in the street, we waited. Drinks were passed around from time to time; eventually, we ate in small groups gathered around shared platters. Café Touba[91] also brings Touba to the many all-night celebrations fuelled by this celebrated drink associated with Amadu Bamba.

4.2.2 Participation in events

Shaykh Amadu Bamba cultural week is celebrated every year in Harlem with a parade,[92] a conference at the UN, private gatherings of *dahiras,* and meetings of community leaders. Throughout the year Murids celebrate many religious festivals (both Muslim holidays and those particular to Murids). Many people also participate in regular *dahira* meetings (some weekly, others less often). In addition, there are *xasssida* days in New York and other US cities. Ndawi Serigne Touba (NST) regularly organises small groups who travel to support the events of other Murid communities (Washington D. C., Columbus, Atlanta, St. Louis, Chicago, Knoxville and others). Vendors at these events sell religious paraphernalia, Senegalese clothing, food, religious books and recordings. There are many events throughout the year, often requiring a high level of participation and significant demands on time and money.

[90] The *Magal* is an annual celebration/remembrance of the day that Bamba was sent into exile in Gabon. *Magal* means 'praise'.
[91] Bamba is credited with creating this unique coffee with a pungent pepper kick.
[92] I estimate 2000 Murids marching in years (2016-18) that I have attended, wearing the finest Senegalese style clothing and carrying American and Senegalese flags, banners identifying *dahiras*, schools, and other associations, as well as other messages.

4.2.3 Sacralizing place

Instantly recognisable are the body movements of ritual prayers (*salat*), perhaps the most common way that Muslims anywhere inscribe themselves upon place, transforming that place into Muslim space. The unrolling of a prayer rug behind the store counter, or in the office or on the bedroom floor demarcates a momentary sacred space. Space for prayer is a significant part of any Murid event. The timing of the event and the movements of the people all flow within the fixed prayer times.

At the NST barbecue, I watched a Baay Faal[93] member use perfume ritually,[94] as he went around and sprayed it on each of the images of the great Murid leaders. When I asked why, he said 'the smell of heaven is on them, if you get close to them you can smell heaven' (NST9 2018). He then sprayed perfume on himself and other participants, and even I received a heavy dose. Inside the Daara Ji *masjid*, during a practice session of a *kurel xassaid* (choir that sings Bamba's poetry) that meets on Thursday nights in conjunction with their weekly *dahira* meeting, one of the men went around and sprayed perfume heavily on everyone in the room, one at a time: first the singers, then on the rest of us. The use of fragrances, incense and perfume is part of many religious traditions from ancient Hebrew tabernacle worship to Hindu temples. In Sufi poetry the scent of flowers is invoked as the scent of heaven, and these fragrances are a connection to the divine. Rumi wrote of 'the fragrance of union with our King' (Chittick 1984:317). Modern mystics, Charismatic Christians and Sufi Muslims use the same language of 'smelling the fragrance of God' (LeClaire 2014) and incense figures prominently in festivals honouring saints (Singh 2015:102). The use of perfume at the NST barbecue is part of this long tradition of fragrance and connection with God.

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[93] The Baay Faal are a Murid sub-order, disciples of Ibrahima Fall, the first disciple of Amadu Bamba, who served him in total devotion. Baay Faals are not required to do the canonical prayers or fasting during Ramadan, their service it their worship.

[94] Observed in three different events: Inside a church building, at Daara Ji Masjid, and at the NST BBQ in Morningside Park.

On one occasion, I witnessed sacralizing movements involving young men carrying bowls of food, chanting thanks to Bamba and Baay Faal, accompanied by *djembes* (drums) into the fellowship hall of Salem United Methodist Church. It was a slow march, synchronised to the beat of the drummer. They chanted *'Gii Keur, Bamba moo ko moom'* (Bamba owns this house). This ritualized takeover of the church basement[95] lasted four intense minutes. Similarly, a few hours earlier, at the Black National Theatre,[96] they began the *Magal* celebrations with *zikr* (remembrance of God). NST men (who were there to set up and to serve the meal that the NST women were preparing) gathered in the centre of the room and walked in a circle singing 'God is one', the *zikr* chant, in Arabic. After twenty minutes or so the crescendo came when they switched to Wolof and chanted, 'New York, *Bamba moo ko moom*' (Bamba owns New York). Meanwhile, the circle walkers pushed closer and closer together into a tight mass of turning and jumping bodies. In both cases, the bodily movements augmented the voices, intensifying the ritual takeover of the place.

What do these ritualised takeovers of the Methodist church building and New York City mean? One could say that the youth were sacralizing the place to make it fit as a Murid space, something that Werbner (1996) identifies as a 'central, essential aspect of Sufi cosmology and of Sufism as a missionizing, purificatory cult … a movement in space that Islamicizes the universe and transforms it into the space of Allah' (322-323). Writing about indigenous peoples in South America Rimassa (2008) describes the ways that symbolic takeovers of the town square imply a symbolic 'appropriation of power to institute new referents and meanings' (no page #). He claims that in the indigenous

[95] If church members or leaders understood Wolof and knew what was said at this event, it seems likely that they would be offended. An interview, the pastor of the St. Marks United church indicated that some of her church members feared that Muslims praying in the building would 'taint' it.

[96] Where they had started the event because, being a Sunday, the church was not available earlier in the day.

symbolic universe of festival and ritual ceremony it functions as a revolt against ritual, ideological, and symbolic domination. Rimassa says that takeovers have a dual meaning:

> Firstly, they demonstrate its capacity to mobilise people, the force of numbers, the strength of the masses, and secondly they allow individuals to see themselves through the eyes of their equals as part of that collective body, and therefore as different from the rest. (Rimassa 2008: no page #)

These meanings resonate with Murid space making wherein being numerous together is a critical component and where seeing themselves as a collective body is also important. Understanding the ritual takeover of the church and the chanting of 'Bamba owns New York' as revolt against the dominating forces of Christianity and secular pluralism may be an overreach. Yet the powerful need to create Murid space, to not be overwhelmed and subsumed by the religious and cultural forces of the place in which they find themselves, may indeed be constituted as a revolt, whereby Murids establish new referents and meanings, a new self-definition as American Murids.

Many young Murids, some in NST for example, carry a strong sense of mission to make Bamba known, to do *da'wah* and win converts who are not of Senegambian origin. For some Americans, the declaration that Bamba owns New York and the ritual takeover of the church basement might be perceived as a threat. An example from Nigeria, of the Yoroba celebration of the *orisha* can illustrate this point:

> During the celebration of its *orisha*, the house qua town shrine (*ilé òrìşa*) invokes it forebears and literally occupies the town, bringing its power from the outside bush into the town shrine, dominating the streets and crossroads, entering into other shrines and houses, stopping traffic, imposing fines , and taking possession of public space. During such ritual takeovers, the house of the *orisha* becomes the palace and kingdom that it manifests and assumes control over the town. Its priests and priestesses represent the kings as well as the military and civil chiefs of the former kingdoms and towns from which they migrated. Such ritual maneuvers are powerful because they manifest the potential of a real political takeover as well. (Apter 2018:132)

The takeover that happens during the Bamba Days' celebrations is by no means as dramatic as what is described in this Nigerian town, but the parade does stop traffic. There are no fines but Baay Faals with wooden bowls do ask businesses along the parade route for money and the chanted ritual takeovers do claim ownership of places and spaces that do not belong to Murids. New Yorkers may bristle to hear the chant that Bamba owns New York. The members of St. Marks United Methodist Church would declare that their

church building is dedicated to Jesus Christ, not Bamba. Creating Murid space within the place of the religious and cultural other may seem relatively innocuous but claiming ownership of the place of the religious and cultural other does provoke tension and conflict. The creation of Murid space within society is challenging, so in the next section I look at how Bamba's disciples negotiate this through the use of distinctive clothing.

4.2.4 Clothing, jewellery, amulets

I had just sat down to lunch at the Pikine Restaurant on West 116th Street when a tall, smiling man in a suit greeted me. I could not place him. I asked his name and how I knew him. He laughingly told me his name, explaining that he was getting off work. By morning he is a taxi driver wearing black slacks and jacket with a white shirt and black shoes, in the afternoon and evening he is a Qur'anic teacher and *imam* at Daara Ji dressed in a Senegalese *boubou* and stocking-footed in the *masjid*.

Mamadou Diouf (2003), Senegalese scholar at Columbia University, opened my eyes to the language of the body. He describes the ways that the bodies of youth in Africa express success or failure and society's reaction to the ways that youth enact in, on and with their bodies the creativity, rebellion, power, vulnerability, hopelessness, and their dis-empowerment. Murid youth in Harlem use their bodies to communicate with each other and with outsiders, messages about their commitment to a particular community, to each other and the working world of NYC. At official Murid events the choice is clear, and the majority wear distinctive Murid and Senegalese clothing, but not all people do, when some seem comfortable in western clothing at religious and cultural events. In other settings it is less clear, I have heard men debating what they should wear, one man arguing for blending in and not cause a stir, the other advocating for showing with their bodies that they are Muslim, Murid, African and Senegalese.

To wear a Senegalese *boubou* or Western attire is a choice to be made each day. Some Murids wear Western attire at school and work and Senegalese *boubous* at special

events. Others always wear Senegalese styles. And yet others, entirely Western styles, but often adding elements of body adornment that send clues (Abdullah 2010:151) that they are Murid (a knit cap with pompom, or an amulet ring, or pin with an image of Bamba or some other *shaykh*). Women's use of clothing, make-up, jewellery and hairstyles is an integral part of their presentation to the world. At many special events women from the same *dahira* will all dress in identical dresses and headscarves (*niroole*). NST uses clothing to identify members at events. When they made their debut at the 2017 Bamba Day Parade they all wore matching black t-shirts with their logo; at subsequent events they have had both men and women in matching cloth cut in feminine and masculine styles. What to wear and when is an important decision for NST members. Should they wear the easily recognisable Wolof *boubous*, headscarves and knit caps with pompoms? Should amulets and other regalia be visible or hidden?

There is significant debate among Murids about what dress says about your faith commitment, courage (i.e. courage to stand out and be different because you are a Muslim and a disciple of Bamba) or purity (an especially important question for young women). Mame Jaarra Busso, mother of Bamba is the idealized role model for female Murid piety (Seye 2016). When talking about women who she invited to join their *dahira*, the woman's leader of NST references purity and dress:

> I see a lot of ladies, a lot of females that wasn't even covering their hair they were just living life, I mean, it's not living life, but they were just kinda lost, that's what I call it. They were lost. I cannot as a Muslim, I cannot see myself not worshiping Allah. If I call myself a Muslim, its who I have to worship. And I have to believe in Mohammad (pbbuh) I have to believe in *Insa*, which is Jesus to you. Because they are all prophets, they all came from God.
>
> Five or six females came lately and joined in. You saw us in the Bamba Day with the dresses... yeah, that's when they joined. I got them dresses. I got them badges and they start working, they start doing the organization, just like we do. (NST5 2018)

She connects uncovered hair with loose living and covered hair and proper clothing with worship. This is also a theme explored in LifeLine, a telenovela produced in Harlem by youth who are also members in NST. The director uses women's dress to reference piety

and religiosity: scantily clad Western wear in contrast to head covered accompanied with typical Senegalese garb.

Young Murid women have less freedom than men, more often wearing Senegalese and/or Muslim garb. Wearing distinctive clothing for a young woman working as a waitress is a challenge. The woman's leader of NST recounts a negative encounter with a customer:

> I work in a restaurant called Le Pain Quotidien, so I am a server. I cover my hair. I do my *hijab* properly, with a black scarf, because we wear all black over there. So, I had a man that came, and as a server and a host, so the only thing I can do is doing my customer service right. 'Hi sir, how are you? Would you like a table for one or two?' he said, 'I want a table for one.' I said, 'Sure, would you like to follow me?' he followed me. I put him in a table of one, and I asked him if he wanted sparkling, tap or still water. He said, 'I want tap water, but can I get served by someone else?' I said, 'Sure, not a problem. Was there any problem with me? Don't I look decent? Am I not doing my customer service right?' He said, 'I have no problem with you, you young, you very beautiful but I have a problem with what you have on your head.' and then I said, 'Ok, I understand you.' I went to my manager, and I told him, 'you serve him, and I might sue the company.' (NST5 2018)

This young woman always has her head covered in a *hijab* as does her younger sister, a more recent immigrant and an 18yr old in 10th grade in a New York high school. I asked the younger sister about her relationship with Americans. She replied:

> Sometimes they bring problems, and I just say, 'I'm sorry', and I then leave. That's the problem; I don't have nothing to do with them. I don't talk to them, because you don't know who is the good one and who is the bad one. But I'm friends with them. I can deal with them. Yes, I forgive them. I don't have any problems with anyone. Even on the train, in the city at six in the morning, everybody's there. If you say excuse me, they are not going to move, so I say, 'Excuse me' and 'I'm so sorry', and that's it. (NST12 2018)

It seems that her choice to wear distinctive Muslim headwear causes difficulties. In the face of discrimination brought on by their determination to wear *hijab*, why do these women persist? MICA chaplain, McCord says:

> Some kids have been discriminated against because they are Muslims. The boys can dress a certain way, and you can't really tell unless they are wearing a *kufi* but the girls you can look at them right away and see that they're Muslim. We want our young women especially to be protected and to feel safe and to feel comfortable to express themselves in the way they dress. The way we dress in Islam is a spiritual expression, it's a cultural expression, and it's a promise to Allah the creator. (MICA 9 2018a)

The chaplain mentioned that it is easier for boys. Yet a man who regularly switches between distinctive Murid dress and western dress, while always including something

distinctly Murid, his prayer beads, an image of Shaykh Ibra Faal or his amulets shared that just using the greeting *asalamalekum*[97] causes problems on the train.

> When you say, '*salamalekum'* when you say all those words, related to Muslims, they just think about those people who been killed on Sept. 11th. 2001, which was very, very hard for all of us. So, it's really complicated. If you just want to know, it's really, really complicated for you to live in the United States. And, mainly when you in the train, when you in public transportation, or when you in a public space, if you just say that you are Muslim, people they are going to look at you with big eyes, you know. They're not really going to understand who you really are. They're not really even gonna listen to the message that you are trying to transmit. You know what I mean? But, thank God we are modernized, and we are educated enough, you know, to be able to be adapted to those kinds of situations, when some people don't try and understand who we really are. (NST2 2017a)

The combination of distinctive clothing, language and adornments used by Murids in public, impacts the ways New Yorkers and Murids interact with each other and their experience of the city. The way Murids dress in public is part of their attempt to make Murid space. The ways young Murids talk about this reveals a complex matrix of positive and negative values and experience that are in conflict. Wearing distinctive clothing creates belonging and exclusion, Murid space making tactics that are visible and public sometimes create conflict, while those tactics that are more private do not.

The Baay Faal are a particular case for the body as text that goes beyond the scope of this research. Many Baay Faal and Yaay Faal[98] wear n*jaxaso* (patchwork) *boubous* with a wide leather belt, a necklace of heavy dark coloured wood beads attached to a small, decorated box and an image of Amadu Bamba or Ibra Fall. Sometimes they wear dreadlocks. Not all Baay Faals wear these distinctive styles or do so only on special occasion. Others always dress as Baay Faal while, yet others switch back and forth with American attire. Many NST members follow the Baay Faal way of life, something that goes beyond clothing or style, in the European and American migrant communities sometimes people adopt this style to indicate they are Senegalese and African but do not know the interior way of being Baay Faal (Pezeril 2008:226).

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[97] This common Muslim greeting is also the standard Wolof greeting.
[98] Collectively the disciples of Shaykh Ibra Fall are called Baay Faal. Baay Faal refers to a male disciple and Yaay Faal refers to a female disciple.

The wearing of amulets (rings, armbands, leather belts, boxes, necklaces) is another way that Murids use their bodies to communicate with others and to facilitate their movement through 'place'.[99] The use of power objects for protection from spiritual powers is an element that I have not pursued in my research, but it is a fundamental part of West African experience (Christians and Muslims) at home and abroad (Gemmeke 2011; Corten & Marshall-Fratani 2001; Boeck & Honwana 2005; Kane 2009; van Hoven 2003; MICA5 2018a). What I know about it is from extensive exploration when I lived in Senegal and Burkina Faso. Akin to the amulets is the wearing of badges with images of Bamba or other caliphs and the wearing of leather or brass boxes that might contain a Qur'an or a *xassaid*.

4.2.5 Moving the body

In the vignette opening this essay, I mentioned the movement of people at Salem United Methodist church celebrating the *Magal*. The entrances persons or groups make at events are a type of movement that creates Murid space. When the president of *Sokhna Mame Diarra dahira* made her entrance, she and a group of women, arriving an hour after all others had been seated, came in moving slowly, majestically and wearing large and elaborate headscarves, in the best and latest styles for older women. Their entrance was carefully choreographed to make the most impact. In similar ways, groups of men made entrances, moving slowly, greeting people along the way, pausing to talk and then being seated in prominent places (including what might be called the 'amen' corner in some churches). Sometimes their seating required shifts in the seating arrangements of multiple people.

[99] There are many stories of the power of these items to blind officials, smooth travel, obtain permits, protect from violence or gain favour at work or school. Although not uniquely Murid, it is prominent and highly visible among Murids.

The Baay Faal have their distinctive handshake. First, two hands meet and clasp then one man bows his head, touching his forehead to the back of the other man's hand while saying that man's family name. Then the second man bows and touches his forehead to the back of the first man's hand while saying that man's family name. This handshake may repeat 1-5 times between the two men and repeated with each of the Baay Faal men present. This handshake serves as a clear boundary marker to all observers concerning who is an insider and who is not. The nature of the handshake means it is visible from a distance, even from a block away. There appears to be a connection to the intensity of commitment in such outward markers.

Another movement sometimes observed in Harlem is more complex, and the messages carried not likely comprehended by any outsider. Young men dressed in Baay Faal n*jaxaso* clothing, with heavy wood and leather necklaces, carrying a large wooden bowl, one with a *jembe* (a type of drum), chanting *dërëjëf* (thank you) Bamba and Shaykh Ibra Faal, going from business to business and to people on the street 'begging for money' or collecting *addiyya* (offering, gift).[100] Their movements only make sense to Senegalese, yet as they do this, they create a bubble of Murid space the follows them along the street.

4.2.6 Voice and sound

The human voice plays an essential part in creating Murid space. Shaykh Mourtada Mbacké[101] ordered the New York diaspora to do *wacc kamil*, the reading aloud of the entire Qur'an, every Friday after the sermon and the prayers are finished. He also ordered that they be faithful in the singing of the *xassaid* (one group does this every Thursday night from 10 pm to midnight). The way in which the *xassaid* form the soundscape of virtually every event represents a significant change in use of sound in the diaspora. In

[100] This type of begging is a translation into the vernacular of the Sufi ethic of modesty and humility, the person begging is making an effort to tame the ego or the carnal soul (*nafs*).
[101] The first itinerate Murid shaykh to the diaspora communities in Europe and America.

Senegal, loudspeakers blast entire neighbourhoods, while in Harlem they must confine the sound to the inside of the building or room where they are meeting. This is an example where the 'strategies' of 'place' overpower the 'tactics' of Murid space-making. The sound of *zikr* also punctuates many gatherings. Many events open with a Qur'an recitation by children, and any serious speaker at a meeting begins with a Qur'an recitation.

Another voice is the voice of the *griot*. The Wolof, like all Senegalese and West African societies are oral societies. Public speaking is an art form that is highly respected. In many public settings, religious and community leaders speak quietly in a voice that only those immediately next to them can hear. The *griot* amplifies their message, taking common utterances and making them eloquent, transforming the quiet voice into a loud, clear, and well-modulated one.[102] A religious or community leader is expected to be modest and unassuming, the griot on the other hand, uses movements larger than life, touching, pulling, cajoling, attracting attention. At the NST barbecue I had the delightful experience of speaking to a crowd of 75 people about myself and my research, hearing the griot repeat each sentence and my own inaccurate and accented Wolof speech become beautiful and clear.

4.2.7 Keur Serigne Touba

Another part of creating Murid space is establishing of a Keur Serigne Touba, wherever there are Murid communities large enough to acquire the funds. Murids in Harlem have such a house, but for the entire course of my fieldwork, it was inaccessible. It was in the middle of a stalled renovation. Shaykh Mourtada Mbacké instructed the Murids in Harlem to acquire a house and gave the seed money to make it a reality. Although inaccessible, it nevertheless serves as a touchstone, 'we have a physical place that is ours'. City notices posted at the site about building codes, permissions, and violations mean that it is no

[102] This is called '*jottali'* (to amplify) in Wolof.

longer Murid space. The success of gaining a place has meant the loss of space. Buying in (literally) to the system to gain a place, which disciples used for many years, has eventually meant temporarily losing that space. Owning a house has pulled them into conflict with the city and with the construction company.[103] Raising $2,000,000 needed for the renovation is a challenge.[104] The move from using space to owning place automatically moves one from the realm of tactics to the realm of strategies needed to control and protect the place claimed. City ordinances represent an obstacle that no amount of tactics will overcome.

The activities, the tactics, described above are all elements that Murids use consciously and subconsciously; they are part of their *habitus*. These activities and the spaces created are intended to benefit all members of the community. Creating Murid space is portrayed as a positive dynamic, eventually leading to improved relations between the Murids and the French in colonial Senegal, but does it is not straight forward that it has the same effect in Harlem. In the next section, I look at some adverse consequences of making Murid space.

4.2.8 What happens when 'Murid space' does not work

Some Murids do not participate in the communal Murid activities because they find the obligations to give time and money burdensome. One of my informants is a Murid who lives in a rural Pennsylvania town (MCM18 2018). He and his wife are disciples of Amadu Bamba and come from Murid families in Senegal, yet they choose to live apart from any of the Murid communities, and they do not travel to New York or other locations for annual celebrations. Instead, they regularly invite my wife and me to join them in celebrations at their home. Sometimes when we are there the TV is tuned to a Murid

[103] I have heard rumours and accusations of mishandled funds and poor management.
[104] In 2018, I attended an all -night fundraiser and helped to count approx. $45,000 in cash that was donated.

YouTube channel that plays in the background. He told me of being cheated by a Murid business partner. Although a Murid, he chooses to keep a distance.

I asked a young Senegalese man visiting New York from D.C. for the filming of the Wolof telenovela LifeLine, 'Are you part of the Murids?' He replied, 'I don't know, yet, if I want to, it demands a lot' (NM1 2018). He also pointed out that this is a big decision, one not lightly taken, and that it has consequences and expectations, references to obligations on time and money. A common complaint in Senegal is of not getting back as much as they give. In her research on Senegalese women's gift exchanges at naming ceremonies and weddings, and in the ways men's remittances are used or invested, Buggenhagen (2011) describes ways people keep while giving (726).

Murid space making raises boundary and belonging issues for converts. African American converts to Islam who join the Muridiyya struggle because they don't speak Wolof or know Senegalese culture (MCM7 2018; MICA 9 2018b). Although committed to Shaykh Amadu Bamba and Murid ideology, they find it challenging to participate. One convert from the Caribbean said he feels like a step-child (MCM16 2018).

4.2.9 Sometimes Murid tactics raise tensions

Clothing is one everyday type of strategy for creating Murid space. For some New Yorkers merely seeing someone in 'Muslim clothing', a woman in *hijab*, for example, creates tension even fear. In an interview, the pastor of a congregation that regularly rents its building to MICA for special events told me that some members are opposed to letting Muslims use their building because they fear that their prayers will contaminate the building (NM11 2017). If Muslim prayers in the building create tension for church members, imagine what the members of Salem United Methodist might feel if they understood Wolof and heard the words of ritual takeover of their building?

There is a dialectic between the positive benefits of creating Murid space for the well-being of the Muridiyya in New York and the negative impact that has on some

individuals. The tactics of creating Murid space also have potential to create tension with non-Murids who may perceive their activities as a threat. Despite these tensions, in the next section, I argue that Murid space is beneficial to their practice as a nonviolent community.

4.3 Murid space and nonviolence

Murids create space in the 'places of the other,' a habitation in the pluralistic world that does not demand control over it. I argue that this gift of transforming space is a social mechanism that enables them to live as a nonviolent community. Their nonviolence is the lived practice of a communal ethic, where their ideology shapes the community even as their embodied practice shapes an ongoing reformulation of nonviolence as peacemaking. Tactically Murids create spaces where they can be fully themselves and at peace in a world often hostile towards black Muslim immigrants. I contend that creating this Murid space physically, socially, and spiritually means the Murid community can thrive within *daar al-kufr. Daar-al-muridiyya* amidst *daar-al-kufr* allows the Murids to relate to their neighbours from a position of communal identity, belonging, solidarity, and nonviolence. Some may minimalize this as conviviality, but I argue that it is a tactic of peacemaking, one that aided Bamba's rapprochement with the French and the principal tactic of modern Muridiyya communities in the global diaspora. It is through their tactical ability to create space that their historical, theological, and ethical discourse about nonviolence becomes an embodied living practice. These embodied values are part of a Murid *habitus* that shapes its members even as they reshape it. In the next section, I argue that unlike other Muslim communities, the Muridiyya has not sought to Islamicize the political domains in which they find themselves. Instead, they are satisfied with creating spaces of relative autonomy.

4.3.1 The political sphere

One understanding, adopted by many Muslims, of the role of Islam in the global community, is that the *Ummah* should be in a position of 'enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong' (Sura 3:104). In the introduction to his book, Muqtedar Khan notes:

> The demand for Islamization is persistent and global. It definitely varies in intensity and nature in its manifestations, but it is safe to acknowledge that in every place where Muslims constitute a reasonably sized community, a section of the said community seeks a more prominent role for Islam. Some demand the incorporation of Islam in the socio-political structures of their societies, while others may desire Islam to play the role of a collective identity. (Khan 2019:4)

Khan goes on to describe the ways these desires are incompatible with the common good of diverse peoples sharing the global community. 'Enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong' demands control of place. Controlling or losing control of place is an issue at the heart of American fears about Muslim immigrants. But, before addressing the modern context, it is important to look again at Murid history.

Babou writes that '*daar al-Islam* in the Wolof states had historically been defined by Muslim spatial autonomy rather than Islamic ideological and political control over a territory' (Babou 2007a:163). He shows from the historical narrative:

> *Daar al-Murid* did not contest French political and administrative domination; rather, it endeavoured to achieve symbolic and cultural and, when possible, geographic autonomy from the colonial realm. By stripping *daar al-Islam* of its political content (that is, the ambition to impose sharia on the land and the people) and by infusing it with cultural meanings (focus on sacred geometry, cultural autonomy, and rituals), the Murids created the conditions needed for its preservation under French colonial rule. (Babou 2007a:174)

Bamba and the Murids under the French colonial rule were 'othered' in their homeland. The creating of Murid space in the place of the other began in this setting and became part of Murid *habitus*. It is from within this space that Bamba comes to embrace the idea of a rapprochement with the French. In addition, Bamba found resources for peaceful relations with the French in his Wolof cultural background, his family heritage, his

Suwarian[105] orientation and his interpretation of the Qur'an. These were facilitated by his community's ability to create Murid space.

Murid *habitus* embodies tactics of the powerless, the people on the margins and the oppressed. Societal change in colonial Senegal, towards peaceful relations between Senegalese peoples and the colonizers, did not come from the French, its inception was from the bottom and had spiritual roots found in *Ihsan*[106] (beautiful behaviour) as well as Wolof cultural roots. Creating Murid space in the place of the hostile other is a skill and a cultural/religious gift learned during years of nonviolent resistance led by Bamba and now stewarded by the Muridiyya in the diaspora. I propose that in the American context, the Muridiyya offer fresh insights for discussion of how Muslim immigrants participate in a pluralistic society.

4.4 Conclusion

Conceptualizing the creation of Murid space as an act of peacemaking is to understand a set of practices that create a space for being. De Certeau, speaks of the 'ways of frequenting or dwelling in a place' (De Certeau 1984:xxii) and how by their movements and activities people moving in a 'place' create 'space'. Second, he describes 'establishing a kind of reliability with the situation imposed on the individual' (De Certeau 1984:xxii) wherein the strategies of control of place make demands on and constrain people; and thus their tactics are about establishing a safe and reliable space within those constraints. And third De Certeau identifies a goal of freedom, 'the plural mobility of goals and desires' which he calls 'an art of manipulating and enjoying' (De Certeau 1984:xxii). Dwelling in Murid space offers the reliability spoken of by De

[105] See (Sanneh 2016) for the history of this pacifist clerical tradition.

[106] See the Hadith of Gabriel… quoted to me by a variety of Murids of different status in the community. Bamba's writing draws significantly on this hadith as a way of organizing core elements of Murid faith. In particular, he wrote extensively about *ihsan*, 'worship God as if you can see him, and even if you cannot, know that he does'.

Certeau, and it is from this space that disciples can pursue the goals and desires that are the Murid Sufi way. This creativity includes their commitment to nonviolence and the ways in which they express this through practice. These movements create space for peaceful relations between Muslim diaspora communities and non-Muslim neighbours with the potential to impact American discourse on Islam and immigration in a positive manner.

The fear-filled undercurrent in American discourse about Muslim immigrants is that 'they' will take something from 'us' (jobs, neighbourhood, marry our daughters) or even worse 'they' will seek to control 'us' (fears of *sharia* and 'no go' zones). In this context, movements to obtain rights and control territory (build a mosque, school, or cemetery, for example) can provoke an angry backlash. This is not to say Muslims should not buy property and build mosques and schools. I support their right to do so and would advocate in their favour. Murids believe they have something to share, first with other Muslims and secondly with the larger world (SEN3 2018). The Murid way of dwelling in Harlem, creates a reliable space, a Murid space, springing from this is a freedom to engage, enjoy and participate in a pluralistic world. However, this is not without internal tensions (some Murids choose not to participate, others feel excluded) as well as external (some outsiders take offence at Murid tactics) tensions. While not attempting to dominate or control territory or obtain political authority, they do create Murid spaces where they are free to perform their devotion to God and practise the beautiful behaviours taught by Shaykh Amadu Bamba.

The way Bamba created Murid space within French colonial Senegal offers a model for his disciples in Harlem as they make Murid space. In my analysis of Murid space-making that involved the ritual takeover of the Methodist Church basement, I argued that there is a difference between 'making space within' and 'claiming the place of' the religious and cultural other'. Claims to the place of the other lead inevitably to conflict.

Movement in this direction is counter to the example of Bamba who created space for himself and his community within the space of the religious and cultural other, this in spite of the fact that that other had usurped the place that was not rightfully theirs. Bamba's creation of *dar al-muridiyya* within the *dar al-kufr* is a remarkable demonstration of nonviolent peacemaking. It reveals a willingness to suffer loss to make peace.

Making and inhabiting Murid space creates a reliable space from within which Murids can participate in a pluralistic world. However, their space making activities sometimes exclude other Murids and are not always appreciated by outsiders. Yet, I argue that their gift of transforming place into space is a social mechanism that enables Murids to be a nonviolent peacemaking community.

Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper. Jeremiah 29:4-7

CHAPTER 5: YOUNG MURID AMBASSADORS

5.1 Introduction

Not knowing where to start my visit to Harlem, I prayed and felt led to go to the Murid Islamic Community in America (MICA) office to ask for the current calendar of events. Entering the MICA office, I encountered a happy group of young men and women working intensely to correct a mistake on the cover of the newest edition of 'Shaykh Ahmadou Bamba Cultural Weeks' magazine[1]. They had printed the correction on labels to fix the error. I joined in the work, and asked, 'What brought you all together today?' The answers came quick and fast: 'We are Murid', 'We are doing this to serve God', and 'to serve Shaykh Amadu Bamba.' One woman said, 'It's like Christians, they go to church every Sunday, just because they are Christians. Whatever the church is doing, they do. When there is some activity or event taking place, they hear about it and participate' (NST11 2017). In other words, they are Murid youth who support whatever the Murid community is doing.

After finishing the corrections, we shared platters of rice and fish. I learned that several of the youth present were actors or producers of a YouTube series called Lifeline.[2] Lifeline is a telenovela featuring young Senegalese people in New York City. They casually mix English and Wolof, presenting a glamorous and aspirational lifestyle, riddled with conflict, attractive to youth in Senegal and beyond. The director of the series says the goal is to 'teach about life and doing what is right' (NST3 2017). The goals of

[1] Official publication of the Murid Islamic Community in America (MICA), published annually in conjunction with the Bamba Day parade in Harlem, NY.
[2] Lifeline has run for two seasons of 22 and 24 episodes, most of which garner more than 125,000 views. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=la43_hQk4-Q

the telenovela align with the vision of Ndawi Serigne Touba[3] (The Youth or The Ambassadors of the 'Lord of Touba'), a nascent Murid youth movement of which these young persons are all members.

Discovering a Murid youth movement in Harlem was a surprise. From this first encounter with Murid youth, members of Ndawi Serigne Touba (NST), I suspected that they represented a significant new element in the Murid diaspora of New York City. Their demeanour was confident and their energy infectious - Murid youth laying hold of their future as the next generation of leaders in the New York Muridiyya. Their Murid religious and cultural values shape them, yet they are also part of American culture, seeking their place and reconfiguring their community. NST declares in its name that they are claiming the socio-political space of youth. With the additional complexity that in Wolof *Ndawi* means both 'youths' and 'ambassadors' thus they make claims for themselves with both socio-political and religious connotations.

In this chapter, I examine the implications of claiming the status of 'Murid youth/ambassadors', defining and clarifying terms through a review of literature on youth and religious transnationalism and analysing the complex social signifiers, spaces, issues related to discussions of youth. Their claim to the position of 'Murid youth' is a claim of power and the reinvention of the political, social and religious spaces they inhabit (Durham 2000:118). The double meaning of the word *ndawi*, signifies they are also making a religious claim to be the ambassadors of Serigne Touba. In my fieldwork I observed and listened to NST members, the way they positioned themselves and their desires to renew the faith of young Murids, rescue 'lost' Senegalese youth, take leadership in the New York Muridiyya, and more. NST members are seeking to reinvent their political and social space.[4] Young Murids contest the political, social, and religious

[3] Touba is the Murid's holy city. Serigne Touba is a title for their founder, Shaykh Amadu Bamba.
[4] Here I am drawing on Durham (2000) for ideas about claims to the positionality of youth are moral and political claims for power to reinvent the political and social sphere.

spaces claimed by first-generation Murids, who sometimes characterise the youth hanging out on 116th street as 'lost', as getting into trouble, or fighting. Those same youths challenge these negative representations. NST, representing Murid youth, is shifting what it means to be Murid in New York, even creating new, more overt and forceful rituals, to stake claims about their position in American society. At the same time, MICA also lays claim to this youth movement promoting it as if it were their idea, seeking to direct the power and the frustration of young Murids towards Wolof cultural norms even as they recognise their potential contributions to the community. Intergenerational tensions are a primary generative force in the creation and ongoing development of Ndawi Serigne Touba, how NST and MICA manage these tensions will shape the emerging face of an American Muridiyya.

This chapter analyses NST in light of the existing literature on youth and religious transnationalism. After a few vignettes introducing the birth of NST I describe the organization they created, its members and their relationship to other well-established Murid organizations in New York. This is followed by a description of the ways NST members put into practice their convictions about service, *da'wah* and nonviolence. Finally, I look at ways they use ritual strategically to negotiate power dynamics. Throughout I pay special attention to the shifting dynamics and claims to power as NST youth negotiate their place in the community. Murid youth, shaped by their religious and cultural values yet also part of American culture, make claims of being the next generation of leaders in the New York Muridiyya. I argue that NST represents the emerging face of an American Muridiyya, carrying a commit to nonviolence and equipped (culturally, linguistically, socially) to share their values broadly. But first, a brief biography of NST, its birth, mission and first activities.

5.1.1 Ndawi Serigne Touba

Ndawi Serigne Touba (NST) is a religious 'organization aimed at spreading the work of Shaykh Ahmadou Bamba, *Khadimu Rassul* (Servant of the Apostle) through events, community service and peer support'.[5] The president of NST described their mission as *da'wah* (invitation to Islam) to 'lost' African youth (i.e. Senegalese youth), that they would find a way to become useful and productive citizens by following the example of Bamba (NST4 2018). NST was conceived on July 13, 2017, when six persons met in Morningside Park at 8 pm: 'We talked about the ideas, talked about what we should do and stuff like that' (NST1 2017a). They launched NST with a barbecue and fundraiser in Morningside Park four days later on 17 July 2017 and according to the vice-president, 'Thank God it was a success, a lot of people came' (NST1 2017a). In 2019, I estimated that there were possibly 120 active NST members in New York.

A burst of highly visible activity followed the launch. Wearing matching black NST t-shirts (bearing their motto: *Jeuf-Jeul*, which means, 'You reap what you sow') and colourful patchwork Baay Faal[6] pants, they have served the organizational needs of the Bamba Day parade in NYC (2017-2020) and Atlanta. NST also served during NYC Magal, the Xassaid days in NYC, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, Atlanta, a Gamou (celebration of a saint) in Massalikoul Jinan, Senegal, and Bamba Day trips to Cincinnati and Dallas. In 2018 they organized a community meeting about violence on 116th Street. The NST Facebook page overflows with pictures from these events. With members in many locations, this is an organic and fluid youth movement emerging along relational lines and facilitated by social media.

[5] From their Facebook page which also says that they are a 501C3 non-profit organization. https://www.facebook.com/pg/NDAWISERIGNETOUBA/about/?ref=page_internal
[6] A high proportion of NST members are Baay Faal.

NST is a classic *dahira,* organizing Murid youth of New York into a community that offers vision, support, belonging, and encouragement for doing the work of Serigne Touba. Murids adopted the *dahira* as a response to the challenges of urban living. 'To the scattered followers, the *dahira* thus offered a place of meeting, of knowledge - the manifest objective being to be known and to know others'[7] (Diop 1981:79). The *dahira* facilitates the *shaykh-talibé* (Sufi master-disciple) relationship creating a channel for direct contact between disciples and *shaykhs* (Diop 1981:80). The activities of the *dahira* serve to reinforce the Murid youth's sense of 'being in the truth' and a way to disseminate the teaching of Shaykh Amadu Bamba, potentially attracting non-Murids (Diop 1981:81). NST's barbecue presented an opportunity to interact with members in a relaxed setting outside of formal religious events.

5.1.2 Barbecue in Morningside Park

The second annual NST barbecue took place in Morningside Park near 116th St. They set up at a picnic table where they could drive up and park along the sidewalk and hand chairs, tables, grills and coolers over the fence. Nearly 25 men and women arrived early to set up. The men set up the charcoal grills, carried in the heavy boxes of food, and raised a canopy for the *xassaid* singers. Women did the actual turning of the meat on the grill and other food preparations with some overlap in roles. A local Senegalese restaurant catered the food: aluminium foil trays of couscous, marinated chicken drumsticks, beef, and hot dogs for the grill, as well as five trays of raw onions to grill with the chicken. I joined several other men to cut up the onions as I listened to the happy joking.

The event was in a public park on a Saturday afternoon, thus with a steady stream of curious passers-by. A police car rolled through very slowly every hour, and in the

[7] 'aux adeptes dispersés, le *dahira* offrit donc un lieu de rencontre, de connaissance - l'objectif manifeste étant de se faire connaitre et de connaitre les autres' (Diop 1981:79).

evening, police mounted on horseback rode by twice. The year before the police asked them to remove the posters they hung from trees. This year they again hung posters from trees and the police did not say anything. One of the speakers that evening took this as a sign, 'we are now known to be doing good not bad. We are known by the police and deemed good people'.[8]

Men came dressed in Western and Senegalese clothing, and most women wore Senegalese fashions, some with *hijab*. I saw what appeared to be two non-Senegalese women who are married to Senegalese men at the event with their husbands speaking in English; otherwise, people spoke Wolof. Some of the NST members have children, 10-15 of whom were present. By the time the food was ready, more than 100 people were sitting in the grass, on chairs, or standing in small groups talking. A man with long braids, a limp, and using a cane came with his tiny charcoal grill, teapot, cups and tray, and served *ataaya* (strong, sweet green tea) all afternoon.

Initially, I was alone watching. I did not know the set-up crew. My first conversation was with the *Door Waar* radio[9] founder. He was suspicious of me and asked why a white person would learn Wolof. He wanted to know, 'What is the motive, the goal?' Some Senegalese fear that a white man like me might be a spy or a security agent. I told him that I had learned Wolof in 1999-2009 while living in Senegal because of my commitment to making disciples of Jesus. He talked at length about Murids; specifically, that being Murid is about the heart, said while tapping his chest. He described his commitment as 'All I want is to be beside the tomb of Shaykh Baay Faal' (NST7 2018).

An older man who said he has been in NYC for 27 years told me of his pride that the youth are doing something never before done! Proud that they are publicly showing

[8] Fieldnote 15 July 2018

[9] Wolof language radio programme, their Facebook page says: 'Radio *Door Waar Reck* wants to be a cultural, educational, sporting, and political radio station with daily themes for debates concerning the Senegalese community.' (Radio Door Waar Reck se veut une radio culturelle, éducative, sportif, et politique avec chaque jour des thèmes des débats concernant la communauté sénégalaises).

that they are Muslim and Murid youth and proud of their organizational skills. He too was suspicious that I might be 'police'. I did not try to counter what I could not disprove, trusting that most people knew that I am not part of the police.

Soon, people arrived who knew me and greeted me warmly. One man, an open and self-revealing person, talked with me for ten minutes about his family's political connections, his education, and his desire to have a career in politics. He had just graduated with a master's degree in geology. He is a bodybuilder. He wants to spend three to five more years in the United States to pay off debts, then find a government job in Senegal. I asked him about NST and its purpose and he replied:

> The purpose is the lost youth who live on 116th, the children of immigrants, they are lost, their parents don't understand them, and they don't have Wolof language or culture. NST wants to bridge the gap. (NST8 2018)

His answer reveals the intergenerational tensions so profoundly felt in the community; parents do not understand their children who do not know Wolof or Wolof culture. He, like many NST members, is an immigrant who came to the United States as a young person knowing Senegalese culture and language, then attended American high school and college. He expressed a desire to give back to his community. He told me that NST is an extension of MICA whose purpose is to prepare leaders for the future.

At the barbecue, I met the son of the *muezzin*, the man who makes the call to prayer of the MICA *masjid,* currently meeting in the storeroom of the corner store. After chatting a bit, he then called his wife away from one of the grills to introduce her to me. They had recently celebrated their second anniversary; she had been in the United States for 18 months. He came in 2013 at age 18. Reflecting on his experience as a taxi driver, he said, 'If you want to survive in the world, be good. That's what we are all about (gesturing to the party and young Murids of NST)'(NST10 2018).

Also present at the event as a guest was the treasurer of the *Tijan*[10] youth association of New York. He told me that some of the members of NST served at their *gamou*, that they had come at 2am and taken over all the hard work, serving the food and cleaning up the trash so that *Tijan* youth could celebrate. I asked him what he hoped to contribute to NYC; he replied, 'Peace is what I would give, with peace we can do all things' (NM10 2018), a reminder that Murids are not the only Senegalese with a deep desire for peace.

At 7:30 pm, after the meal, they called everyone together for a meeting about the upcoming Bamba Day activities. There was a welcome to all members and to those who are not yet members. Imam Bousso introduced the formal part of the NST picnic, including an exhortation from the Qur'an and comments about a recent death in the Murid community with a request for prayers to be done on their behalf. The group responded by immediately doing the requisite number of prayers before the next speaker, a MICA board member (the *ataaya* maker) who is also a member of NST spoke:

> I come with three words to share with you: happiness, pride, and hope. Happiness that we are gathered together in peace and joy. Pride in my community as represented by you. Hope, because the number of NST members at the barbecue is double as compared to last year.'[11]

This speaker and member of NST illustrates that not all members are young in chronological age; he appeared to be mid-50s. Claims of youth (as I will discuss in the literature review) are claims about power and positionality in society. It may also be that the *attaya* (popular Senegalese tea) maker is identifying with being an ambassador for Serigne Touba or perhaps he is simply a representative member from MICA. Not only did he express his feelings of joy and pride, but he also delivered an official message from MICA, 'we have your back' spoken in English twice in an otherwise Wolof speech.

Another speaker advised everyone that they should live and work together in unity. 'Don't do it for NST or yourself but work as if Bamba was here in our presence. See him

[10] The Tijaniyya are the largest Sufi order in Senegal.
[11] Fieldnotes 15 July 2018

as standing in our midst. He is the one between us. We don't work for ourselves or NST it is all for Serigne Touba. Look to your relationship (as in, take stock of and fix if deficient) with Bamba.'[12] The end of the meeting included many confessions of '*Baal ma akk*' (Forgive me if I offended you). It was followed by chanting loudly and repeatedly, '*Jërëjëf Serigne Touba*' (Thank you Lord Touba). After everything was over and people were going home, the *jembe* players gathered on the walkway in the park and played much louder, *Sabar* style. Many of the youth danced briefly, showing off a few moves in this popular Senegalese dance form.

Becoming an American Murid community

Writing about her research among Sierra Leoneans in Washington D.C., D'Alisera (2004) describes doing fieldwork in a place familiar to her and now made unfamiliar by the ways Sierra Leoneans reassigned meaning to things she took for granted. She found that her 'notions of familiarity and distance collapsed in on each other in confusing and sometimes emotionally charged ways' (D'Alisera 2004:34–35). Observing Senegalese Murids doing a barbecue in the park was both familiar and foreign. At most American barbecues men grill the meat but at this barbecue women turned the meat, confounding my sense of 'how to barbecue' and making the familiar distant. In Senegal, during *Tabaski* (*Eid al-Adha*), many families grill meat in their private family courtyard. Eating in public is uncommon except for special occasions like the pilgrimage to Touba or at funerals where guests gather in the street outside the home and giant pots of rice and meat are cooked over fires in the street. A barbecue in the park seems to be a classic American activity and the fact that NST has chosen to make this an annual event speaks loudly about their American integration. They put up a poster of Amadu Bamba and three others from the 'Amadou Bamba: a Muslim Peacemaker' poster series. Many of the men wore Senegalese *boubous*

[12] Ibid.

as did most women, yet somehow the event felt American, perhaps because of the smoking grills, and the endless trips to the cars or the store for more supplies. There was plenty of discussion about the meat, whether it was done or not, and when to turn it. People were sitting on the grass or blankets talking, eating and laughing. Although using the form 'barbecue', it may not mean the same thing to NST members as it does to me.

Besides the form of an American barbecue in the park, it appears that they are also embracing some aspects of American family life. For example, I watched a Senegalese man help his wife change a baby's diaper, an event I never witnessed in ten years of living in Senegal. As I was visiting with one young man, he called his wife over to introduce her to me. When I lived in Senegal (1999-2009), I do not recall someone bringing their spouse to me to make sure I connected with them.[13] In Senegal I learned about family relations from visiting people in their homes or during ritual events like baby naming ceremonies. In another instance at the barbecue in Harlem, I saw a young couple caring for two children discuss who would do what with the children. These are all activities that I have never witnessed in Senegal. However, none of this caused a stir or even a comment from people at the event. These Senegalese Americans are living a new reality that is Murid, young, and transnational.

5.2 A religious transnational youth movement

The NST members I interviewed called themselves 'Murid youth' and connect with other youth in the global Murid diaspora. However, simplistic definitions and conceptualizations of youth and transnationality are not adequate for understanding NST as a transnational religious youth movement. The Muridiyya in Harlem is part of a Senegalese diaspora that, since the 1980s, has grown and prospered as young people

[13] This has changed in the intervening years since I lived in Senegal, young couples interact differently together, for example, shopping together in modern supermarkets.

following multi-reasoned dreams migrated to New York. Next, I turn to literature on youth and religion in a transnational world to understand the emergence of NST in the New York Murid diaspora.

5.2.1 Problematizing youth

Who or what is 'youth'? 'Youth' defies a universal definition and is instead a socially constructed category (Durham 2000; Boeck & Honwana 2005). The 'common anthropological … definition of youth as a developmental phase in a life course is anchored in the idea of life stages in which youth is defined in relation to the correspondence between social, and physical developmental thresholds', is flawed because it conflates psychological, physical and social maturation and the idea that lives can be compartmentalized into discrete stages (Christiansen et al. 2006:14). Considering biological age, Abbink 'pragmatically limits the category of "youth" in Africa to the 14-35 age bracket' (Abbink 2005:6).

Conceptualizations of youth are closely interrelated with ideas about generations and inter-generational conflict and co-operation (Gomez-Perez & Leblanc 2012; Gusman 2012; Christiansen et al. 2006; Durham 2000; Last 2005; Mondain et al. 2012; White 2012; Abbink 2005). Yet as Mannheim pointed out in his seminal paper *The Problem of Generations*, the concept of 'generation' is problematic potentially referring to social location, biological age group (very hard to define), or a cohort shaped by a shared historical event (Mannheim 1972). Gomez-Perez and LeBlanc downplay the tendency to see youth and elders in opposition, saying other forces at work (political, social, economic) require strategies of co-operation, not only on the macro-scale but on the micro-scale including the intimate relations within families. Abbink describes a struggle between 'younger' and 'older' generations (cognizant of the complication of these terms), where traditional African societal systems for defining generations and expectations have

broken down and seem only to be adhered to in the 'breach rather than the keeping' (Abbink 2005:5) where children are valued, and youth are considered a menace.

There seems to be an inherent bi-polarity in scholarly conceptions of youth, both as a signifier of exclusion, impossibility, emasculation, denigration and futility and as a constant source of creativity, ingenuity, possibility, empowerment, a source of alternative, of yet to be imagined futures (Comaroff & Comaroff 2005:29). African societies increasingly look to young people as instruments of change, yet at the same time, youth are seen as a threat (Diouf 2003:2–3). Are youth 'makers' or 'breakers' of society, are they combatants or healers, onlookers or activists? (Boeck & Honwana 2005:2–3). The young are simultaneously portrayed as 'the terrors of the present, the errors of the past, the prospect of the future' (Comaroff & Comaroff 2005:20). Murid elders in New York speak about young Murids as youth and NST claims this category for themselves.

NST members live in a transnational reality where the interaction of global and local pressures leads to the fragmentation, dissolution, and loss of local culture and memory in societies undergoing demographic, political, media, cultural and religious transformations (Diouf 2003; Gomez-Perez & Leblanc 2012). Calling themselves youth is about positioning themselves in society (Christiansen et al. 2006), and leading counter-discourses (Gomez-Perez & Leblanc 2012). Living in the diaspora, they experience freedoms that they would not have in Senegal having escaped the control (although not entirely) of familial and social structures and living in a new 'geography' (Diouf 2003).. NST members describe themselves as victims of violence and racism, while also positioning themselves in their local context and attempting to lead a counter-discourse about being young Muslims. Many NST members are elites, with American college degrees and job opportunities, well-positioned to influence their transnational communities (Adogame 2004; Dorsch 2005). Murid youth in the diaspora have considerable agency. They are neither universally manipulated nor passive actors but are

individuals attempting to chart their course (Abbink 2005). In the following paragraphs, I present two perspectives on youth with particular relevance to NST and the situation of Murid youth.

Lost generation

In Harlem, I have heard the term ‘lost youth’ in a variety of formulations coming from both older and younger persons. 'Claims to the position of youth, claims about the nature of youth, and moral claims about youth are centrally involved in the reinvention of political and social space' (Durham 2000:118). Young Murids contest the political and social spaces claimed by first-generation Murids, who characterize the youth hanging out on 116th street as ‘lost’, as getting into trouble, or fighting. Those same youths challenge the negative representations, saying they are Murid *sadiq* (true Murids) (MCM12 2018). The fact that both NST and MICA talk about the ‘lost youth’ needs additional interrogation. Two examples from Africa help to clarify what is at stake.

In Uganda, the *Balokole* (the ‘born again’) construction of the world represents an opposition between one generation, the ‘born again’, and another generation that is ‘lost’, their elders. The past is presented in this vision as the age of darkness and contrasted with the idea of a moral revolution that will guarantee a shining future for Uganda (Gusman 2012:479). Looking at the social situation of four ‘power inversions’, or *jihads*, where youth took control in Northern Nigeria, it can be demonstrated that at certain junctures 'the old are considered to have failed the societies they led. Hence the failure of the old can be as significant an issue as the success of the young' (Last 2005:37–38). The idea of a ‘lost generation’ is commonplace in discourse about youth, but these examples from Uganda Pentecostals and Nigerian Muslims question who is lost – the youth or their elders? In Harlem, are the young Murids getting into trouble ‘lost’ or is it their elders who got lost, failing to pass on their language, culture and faith, failing to engage the challenge

of living as a minority under the influence of dominant American culture? Among Murids in Harlem, in some cases it is the youth who are lost and in others it is their elders. Traversing this intergenerational tension by shifting the social dynamic is explored in the next section.

Social shifters

A perspective of youth as 'social shifters' focuses attention on the situation of youth in society, their relationships to social forces and structures. The term was first used to describe social relations by Durham:

> As people bring the concept of youth to bear on situations, they situate themselves in a social landscape of power, rights, expectations, and relationships—indexing both themselves and the topology of that social landscape. They do so… in a dynamic, contestive, and imaginative way. Shifters work meta-linguistically, drawing attention to specific relations within a structure of relations, to the structure itself. This seems to be particularly the case with the mobilization of the idea of ''youth'' in social life. (Durham 2000:116)

'Social shifters' describes the way youth are positioned and are positioning themselves within society, with the capacity to create social configurations (Christiansen et al. 2006:12). 'Social shifters' is understood as denoting the relational concept of youth as situated in a dynamic context, 'beings-in-the-present and as social actors' (Boeck & Honwana 2005:2). African youth, however defined, are often marginalized and excluded, they are liminal and interstitial subjects, their ability to cross boundaries and inhabit multiple worlds being both vulnerable and violent. Young people's ability to mediate these contradictions in African society places them 'squarely in the centre and generates tremendous power' (Boeck & Honwana 2005:10).

This idea of youth as social shifters can clarify the situation of NST and their context within the Muridiyya and the larger society of New York City. They are aware of the power difference between them and MICA, between themselves and Shaykh Mame Mor Mbacké, and regarding the larger American society. They are creating ways to tip that imbalance a bit in their favour through participation in ritual, something I will

develop later in this chapter using Catherine Bell's theory of ritual practice. By being the best Murids and by serving to the greatest extent, they win more agency. Creating a youth movement with enough momentum that they gain attention from two rival *shaykhs* moves them from undesirable to desired. Wearing uniforms, matching T-shirts or *boubous*, at public events moved them from invisible to visible. As Durham observes this 'situates them in the social landscape' (Durham 2000:116), and now the community must reckon with them.

All conceptualizations of youth are socially and culturally constructed influenced by historical, geographical, political, religious, and educational contexts. Inherent in conceptualizations of youth, whether imposed or appropriated, are dynamics of power and control, rights, worldview, access to resources, and means of communication. Choosing to see Murid youth as 'social shifters' offers a powerful analytical tool to interrogate the ways they point out imbalances and bring into awareness things hidden. NST youth are socially situated in a dynamic context, allowing them to see opportunities in the margins that the leaders in MICA do not. Murid youth cross boundaries and mediate the contradictions of being Sufi Muslim youth in a pluralistic and non-religious world. Before looking at how NST members negotiate these challenges, I review the relevant literature on religion and transnationality.

5.2.2 Religious transnationalism

NST is a self-consciously transnational youth organization, organized as a classic Murid *dahira*. They have members in multiple diaspora communities across the United States and globally. NST members travel regularly to visit Murid friends and family in other cities in USA, Europe and Senegal. They are in constant communication with these people via social media.

The simplest definition of religious transnationalism is: when 'people move, they take their religions with them' (Adogame & Spickard 2010:7–8). A formal definition of

transnationalism, as borrowed from Badie & Smouts (1992), is ‘any relation which, deliberately or by its nature, constructs itself within a global space beyond the context of the nation-state, and which escapes, at least partially, the control or mediating action of States’ (Marshall-Fratani 2001:80). Defining the term from a person-centred perspective, migrants ‘now tend to live their lives simultaneously across different nation-states, being both “here” and “there”, crossing geographical and political boundaries. “Transnationalism” is the term commonly used to contextualize and define such migrants’ cultural, economic, political and social experience’ (Riccio 2001:583). NST members thrive as a part of their transnational community, fitting into the significant global shifts in religious identities and youth.

Many African youths find belonging in Pentecostal and other Christian revival movements, or in Islamic revivalism. They are ‘attracted by the new religious movements and are joining (in large numbers) a discourse of morality and identity that holds out the promise of regeneration and collective power with transnational resonance' (Abbink 2005:21). The NST members participate in a discourse about morality and religious identity in their American context. NST as a *dahira* is part of a religious framework for youth to create new networks promoting joint economic activity, new work ethics, creating what Abbink (2005) calls ‘networks of opportunity’. Murid youth in New York encounter individuals from many other religious traditions. One NST leader told me that 70% of his friends are Christian (NST2 2018), while interaction with other Muslims who are not part of the Muridiyya and not Sufi is also significant.

5.2.3 Murid youth as transnational religious actors

Muslims in the diaspora find and negotiate new ways of being Muslim (Soares 2005; Salzbrunn 2004; D’Alisera 2004; Ebin 1996) that allow them to fit into their context, keeping some traditions, adapting others and creating new ones. The *dahira* offers Murids a communal space of belonging and solidarity, a place to achieve social status, similar to

what scholars have described for Pentecostal churches in diasporic contexts (Asamoah-Gyadu 2010; D'Alisera 2004; Johnson 2006; Salzbrunn 2004). Alternatives to the Sufi experience of the *dahira* and other Muslim experiences of a close, ethnic diaspora community present challenges. 'Contemporary transnational migration can create people who find themselves unconnected with particular places, states or ethnic groups, but still faced with a burning question of who they are' (Adogame & Spickard 2010:19). This disconnectedness includes questions about morality and purity when encountering a pluralistic non-religious world. In some cases, deterritorialized Muslim migrants create new networks united by religious fundamentalism without the moderating elements of culture and tradition (Roy 2005).

However, Murid youth hold onto Senegalese culture and Murid rituals as they learn to inhabit the new local space in ways that result in a local rooting of their transnational network (Salzbrunn 2004). Their discourse about morality and youth is an essential element for understanding the strategies of youth in a transnational world. Audrain (2004), when interviewing young converts to the *Baay Faal,* found that part of their motivation was the creation of a new self. Their conversion was a way to 'reset the counter' (159), that by renouncing their transgressions (alcohol, smoking and other faults) they experienced God's forgiveness and a fresh start on life. Audrain says, 'This purification, a true rebirth, is related to "born-again" theology' (159) and he compares the motivations and experiences of Baay Faals to those of Nigerian Christian 'born-again' youth. Many NST youth are *Baay Faals*. As Muslim youth attempting to save the lost Senegalese youth in New York, they are like 'the growing number of youth joining Pentecostalism modifies intergenerational relations, by assigning to the youth the role of moral revolution guides' (Gusman 2012:471).

Morality and right religious practice, being good Muslims and good Murids are part of the ongoing conversation among NST youth in Harlem. One NST board member

expressed this by setting up an opposition between the Muslim way of Bamba and the temptations of 'fun' in the United States:

> Cheikh Amadu Bamba is one of those personalities that we all respect in Africa … He really wanted people to spread his message with words like peace, love, harmony but mainly Muslim way, you know, like Islam. So, as we all know, [in] the United States of America, here you can find everything that you want to find. If you want to have fun, there is a lot of ways to have it. If you want to be like in a very negative life, there is a lot of ways to find it. But as we just don't want to lose our culture. We [are] young, and we know everything starts by being young, you know, so we just wanted to bring our participation in that work that he did well. (NST2 2017b)

He sees himself and NST as having a role in bringing Bamba's messages of proper behaviour for Muslim youth. Speaking about this commitment to appropriate behaviour that Murids prioritize, that they read and sing in from Bamba's poetry, a marcher in Bamba Day parade said:

> We keep our faith inside most of the time. Today's the day to show it on the outside. Islam is all about behaviour and that being a Murid means you have the 'inside' of Islam, the behaviour, the Sufi understanding of what good behaviour is. (MCM22 2019)

For Murids, like all Sufis, *ihsan* (beautiful behaviour) is elevated to the same importance as *islam* (pillars of practice) and *iman* (pillars of belief). Bamba Day parade gives opportunity to showcase this quality, to proclaim to the world that disciples of Bamba have a witness about morality, purity and behaviour. An unidentified speaker in a video announcing the birth of NST, spoke about their purpose saying that NST 'attracts us to the Murid way, and makes us close to Serigne Touba, because, also, we see that this city and the way it is going for the youth, the city makes it easy to lose the way' (Mbaye 2017).

Young Murids are vocal about the challenge of being faithful Muslims in a secular non-religious society. Their experience tells them that it is easy to lose one's way in New York, that there are attractions and attitudes contrary to the way of Bamba which they must combat. In a city that is sometimes hostile towards Muslims who distinguish themselves by dress or speech, they attempt to bear witness, first to young Senegalese and second to the non-religious watchers. NST members are transnational religious actors seeking to articulate what it means to be Murid as American citizens, which is different and a shift from what their parents and other first-generation Murids did who saw

themselves as temporary migrants who needed to find ways to be faithful until they returned to Senegal.

5.3 A transnational Sufi youth movement within the Muridiyya

Transnationalism is an imagined translocal space inhabited in the local, with a constant awareness of the global (Salzbrunn 2004). People find ways to 'write' their participation in these transnational communities into the spaces wherever they live (D'Alisera 2004). People take their religion with them when they move and then adapt to the new locale, while at the same time remaining intimately connected to the homeland, which results in the creation of a translocal space that invigorates religious communities while empowering the participants. These translocal communities depend on their participants sharing an imagined translocal space which they experience in their various local communities. However, people's religious affiliations can change. Some Senegalese Tijans become Murids in migration contexts and vis-versa. I interviewed a woman who came to New York as an avid, committed Murid but after an extended illness, a vision of Jesus, and prayer for healing, she renounced her old faith and joined a church in Harlem made up of mostly West African Christians (NM4 2018).

Ndawi Serigne Touba members are mostly between 18-30 years old. They call themselves 'youth', with an intended double meaning of young disciples of Shaykh Amadu Bamba and as his ambassadors.[14] They are transnational migrants, fluent in multiple languages and cultures. They are well-educated, motivated, and resourceful. They are part of the newest generation of Murids, and they are shifting the dynamics of the Muridiyya in New York City, particularly the locus of power from the older generation to the younger. The intergenerational power struggle, although downplayed by both sides, represents an internal challenge to Murid peacemaking commitments.

[14] *Ndaw* can mean either 'youth' or 'ambassador' depending on the context.

Describing the emergence of NST, its mission and the perspectives of its members gives a fresh understanding of the Muridiyya as a locally rooted transnational Sufi order connected with its past in Senegal and organizing for its future as an American Muridiyya.

5.3.1 Three Murid youth *dahiras*

NST is not the first *dahira* to be organized by Murid youth in New York. In 1981, Mustafa Mbacké came to New York to study architecture. During this time, he rediscovered the writings of his great-grandfather Amadu Bamba (Ebin 1990:26) and with help from his prestigious family, started *dahira Nurul Daarayn* in a house in Brooklyn. The group members were young and had a vision to reach African American youth, inviting them to join the *dahira*. Mustafa Mbacké translated and published in English a collection of Amadu Bamba's writings,[15] to share his teachings with outsiders (MCM14 2018). *Nurul Daarayn* thrived for a period, but when the primary concentration of Murids became centred in Harlem, new *dahiras* formed creating competition and conflict. The community in Harlem was oriented towards a more traditional Murid vision, more inward-looking, creating a community for Murids, and collecting *adiyya* (offerings) to send to Touba. *Nurul Daarayn* was more outwardly oriented with a vision to invite Americans to follow Amadu Bamba and to share his teaching. Reflecting on this experience, Mustafa Mbacké said, 'Leadership is difficult. There were two completely different visions of the world altogether, impossible to reconcile' (MCM14 2018).

The more traditionally oriented *dahiras* in Harlem coalesced around the formation of MICA, which became the unified face of the Muridiyya in the United States. However, in 2004, younger members of MICA formed *Sopey Shaykhul Khadeem* School, affectionately known as '*Daara Ji*' (the school) because of its focus on teaching Arabic,

[15] M'Backe, Moustapha 1987 Sindidi A Prayer: The Most Perfect Prayer for the Body and the Soul. New York: Khadimou Rassul Society Publications.

Qur'an, and the teachings of Shaykh Amadu Bamba. *Daara Ji* started in response to alleged corruption within MICA and a desire for more than the traditional social focus on Murid celebrations (MICA5 2018b). *Daara Ji*'s *kurel* (choir) *xassaid* became a significant part of Murid events. *Daara Ji* also hosted conferences featuring Murid intellectuals and their commitment caused people to take a critical look at MICA, saying, 'those youth are doing better than we are' (MICA5 2018b). Eventually, this prompted a change in leadership within MICA, and term limits were adopted for office holders. MICA also started a Qur'anic school. Since then there has been reconciliation between MICA and *Daara Ji*, and members of MICA or Daara Ji participate in the activities of both organizations. For example, I attended the funeral of a prominent MICA member held in the Daara Ji *masjid*.

Contrary to *Daara Ji*, NST formed from within MICA. A MICA leader told one of the NST founders: 'MICA has been here for a long time and the one thing that we notice is that we don't see the youth in the events at all' (NST1 2017b). This NST founder's understanding of this was, 'they want the youth to be a part of everything that the Murids are doing so that when they leave, in the future, we can take the work, and take it the next level' (NST1 2017b). By 'leave' he means when the elders die or are no longer able to lead. In an NST publicity video featuring sharply dressed leaders (men in Western suits and women in Senegalese dress) standing on the sidewalk in front of Jacob Soul Food,[16] each leader gave a few words about their vision for NST. One gave an invitation for anyone who has a desire to do the work of Serigne Touba to join saying:

> Ndawi Serigne Touba is, you know, a movement. A movement that we want to last beyond our time. We what those who are in the United States, and much wider, all, anyone wherever they are in the world, disciples who work for Serigne Touba, who are for him, to count themselves a part [of NST]. [17] (Mbaye 2017)

[16] At the corner of Frederick Douglass and 143rd Street, one of a Murid owned restaurant chain in Harlem.
[17] My translation of 'Ndawi Serigne Touba dafa nekk, lo xam ne, movement la, mais movement bo xam ne, tey ji bëgg na nu mu wes suñu njot. Bëgg nanu tey ji ku yewoo ci Unites State, di gis sa bopp, bëgg

Branding NST as movement is a claim for significance and an assertion that something needs to change. Working for Serigne Touba is identified as a global movement for change, but what kind of change the movement seeks is not clarified. The NST president was more explicit and pointed towards intergenerational issues in the Murid community:

> We all are in this city, but many of us did not know each other. Serigne Touba brought us together, brought us together, and we will not separate again. What unites us is greater than us. So those who are surprised and say, 'they are only youth' And this is why it has gone this way because those who live here … we are youth, and our hands can reach certain places. We know what we can do. Therefore, where our feet can reach, maybe the feet of our elders cannot reach. Therefore, I mean working for Serigne Touba, we have a desire to take him everywhere, everywhere, everywhere in this city. We have a desire to take him there, make Serigne Touba known, make known his value as you have heard, I mean the value of humanity is in his hands. Therefore, those of us here know Serigne Touba, at least we have somethings that we know about him. However, there are those, those Americans, and those born here and live here who don't know, we need to make them understand because we are ambassadors of Serigne Touba. [18] (Mbaye 2017)

He too talks about a movement, comprised of Murid youth who did not previously know each other now united by NST and their commitment to Serigne Touba. Second, he notes that some dismiss them as 'only youth'. Third, he begins to craft a narrative, saying that they have gifts and capacities that their elders do not. By referring to 'where our hands can reach' and 'where our feet can reach', he positions the youth in the Murid community as persons with potential to do things their elders have not been able to do, i.e. to go where 'maybe the feet of our elders cannot reach'. Fourth, he expresses a relatively new emphasis on *da'wah*, to take Serigne Touba everywhere and make him known to several categories of people: Americans in general, to those 'born here' (in the context of his speech youth born of Senegalese parents), and those who 'live here' (youth born in Senegal but now living in New York). In this, one of the earliest expressions of his vision

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nanu tey elarger ko, kipp ko xamene foo mennate nekk ci adina si, di ndaw, di liggeyyal Serigne Tuba, di tax laa jukk, di gis sa bopp'.

[18] My translation of 'Nun ñii ñepp dañuy nekk si dëkk bi, yu bare xamenteu ñu woon. Serigne bi moo ñu bole, te bole nanu te dootu ñu takkaleko. Lii ñu bole ëpp na ñu kon ñeneen nii rekk key ñoo ñu jaxale, ñoo ne, 'Ndawi rekk'. Te li tax moo deme nii ndaxte fi di dëkk loo xameni si sa di fuss noonu (unclear) ñun ay ndaw te fu si nekk suñu loxo mën na fa yegg, mën na fa jotte xam naan ko bu baax. Kon daldi foo xamenisi suñu tank mënn fa yegg, xeyna mag, seeni tank mënul fa yegg, bu tax na manam liggeey Serigne bi nii am nanu yenne yobbu ko fune, fune, fune si dëkk bi. Am nanu yenne yobbo ko fa. Xamale Serigne Tuba, xamale njerin gi xamenti si, yangi degg, manam njeriñu doomu adama dafa nekk ci loxoom. Kon nun nii danaka manam xam Serigne bi rekk, xeyna am naa lu ñu ci xam. Waye n inga xamenesi key, ñey moi American yi ai ni nga xamente si ñoo judo fi ak ñoo fi dëkk, ni nga xamul te xamal ko ñungi wara fuss seen loolo noono kon nu ñepp ay ambassador serine tuba lañu.'

for NST the president called upon young Murids to see themselves as ambassadors for Serin Touba with a mission to three categories of lost people who need their message. Implied in both the text and tone of his message is that the older, first-generation Murids were unable to accomplish the mission that they as youth are in a position to achieve.

The MICA imam arrived and was given the microphone. In the background, appearing from time to time on the restaurant steps were two MICA board members (Mbaye 2017). This carefully staged production communicates by proximity and positioning that NST has MICA's approval. I also attended an NST general assembly[19] meeting in the *masjid* behind the corner store,[20] where representatives from the Murid community gave their blessing to NST and its leaders. Neither the MICA *imam* nor the MICA members who spoke at the NST general assembly referred to the intergenerational tensions expressed by NST leaders in a variety of settings.

Members and leaders of NST have, in turn, voiced their self-understanding as helping their elders. At the 2018 *Magal,* while eating together, a popular Senegalese singer who divides his time between New York and Dakar commented to me, 'Look at [Papa], he's just sitting, and NST is doing all the work, this is the way it should be' (MCM15 2018). For some, the goal of NST is to preserve Murid community as they know it:

> What we want to have happen is pretty simple, follow [the] people that we found here the pioneers of this Muridiyya in New York City … that gives us a chance to practise still what we used to practise back home, by going to *magals*, by meeting up with families and friends in the same room, share our religion… have fun … we eat, we do our *zikru Allahs*[21] … we have the chance to come here and [find what] our parents built in America, so we definitely want to be the next generation that continues all this hard work they did. And give it to our sons. (NST6 2018)

This NST member focuses on his appreciation for what the elders built in America. His hope, as a young married man with a small son, is to preserve and build upon what the

[19] Jan. 21, 2018
[20] The owner of DSM is one of the stalwarts of the Murid community and the *masjid* is MICA's official *masjid* while Kër Serigne Touba is under renovation.
[21] *Zikhr* is the 'remembrance of God'. He is using a common Wolof description

first generation has succeeded in creating. Others indicate that while they are committed to being part of MICA, they have strong desires to exercise more agency than in the past. For example, the president of NST says:

> Every time we have an event, for this Bamba Day, each member has a *sas* (dues) of 100 dollars [which] includes your clothes … the badge you will have and all the expenses we are going to [have] during the Bamba day. We are going to have an amount to give to the people who first organized this event, which is called MICA. We are in some way under MICA, but we have our own freedom to do what we want to do. (NST4 2018)

He feels an unresolved tension between their obligation to MICA and a desire to exercise his freedom in new ways. Another leader in NST says:

> In MICA there has been a lack of young people … since a long time ago. So we just decided to [be] the young part of the MICA ... but in another way by moving by ourselves … because we think, like we, you know ... we [are] going to be humble ... but we think we are smarter than them. (NST2 2017a)

This man's observations reveal how he and others see themselves as part of MICA yet feel conflicted because they bring talents and perspectives shaped by their participation in two cultures. Others acknowledge frustration with the older generation and a need for youth to have a place of leadership in the community. The NST vice-president spoke of the incompetence of MICA to make use of modern technology and social media. His example was the 2017 UN Conference, where security denied many Murids entry to the building because they had not brought proper IDs (NST1 2017b). His complaint about incompetence with social media is perhaps indicative of more profound frustration, having talents to share but not being invited to do so. This potential was referred to by the NST president when he said, that the 'feet of the youth can get to places their elders cannot'. NST member's complaints represent a desire to assert moral and religious authority on their terms, using the skills and potential that they have to contribute, to work for Serigne Touba. NST members are 'makers and breakers', exposing problems as the first step towards finding a solution, but often the youth have the social media skills to correctly inform the community but are not called upon to use them as in case of the appropriate ID at the UN event.

NST and MICA seem to be making attempts to work together. The NST president described when the new youth *dahira* emerged, some persons in the older generation disparaged their desire to be more involved in community life:

> Before NST started they did not understand. They didn't understand, and they just thought that [we were] a bunch of young people [who] just want to, wanna come and mess up. Now they appreciate it and they ask their kids to join [NST], now they are the ones who empower us, who encourage us. (NST4 2018)

He describes a change, probably an ongoing transition, where some older members of the community changed opinion, moving away from expecting the youth 'to mess up' to desiring that their children participate in the Ndawi Serigne Touba *dahira*.

In the next section, I show that NST carries many of the classic characteristics of a Murid *dahira* (Diop 1981). Following Diop's descriptions, I look at how NST has reproduced the three primary functions of the *dahira* in addition to new elements they have introduced.

5.3.2 NST: A classic Murid *dahira*

MICA promotes NST, channelling the power and the frustration of young Murids in a direction that honours Wolof cultural norms and at the same time recognises their desire for self-expression and the utilization of their gifts. The formation of NST is a response to the issues and challenges of Murid youth in America who value their cultural/religious heritage while also being shaped by American culture. The Senegalese scholar, Momar Coumba Diop (Diop 1981:80–81) described three primary purposes of the *dahira*: to serve the needs of the *shaykh*, the needs of the *talibés* and to promote Murid ideology. Using these three categories, I look at NST and its activities.

***Shaykh-talibé* relationship**

Understanding the *shaykh-talibé* relationship is central to understanding NST. The importance of this relationship was on display at JFK International Airport where NST

members joined other Murids to welcome Mame Mor Mbacké, the official itinerant Murid *shaykh* assigned to the diaspora. Mame Mor has held multiple private meetings with NST leaders. The NST Facebook page features many pictures of members on their knees in front of Mame Mor with outstretched hands to receive his blessing at receptions they hosted in his honour. The NST Vice-President recounted:

> He wanted to have a meeting with us … We sat there about 45 minutes to an hour meeting with him, no intermediate, just us and him … He said 'You have my full permission and I believe in you guys … I saw your actions before your words … I support you 100%… whenever you have any questions, anything that you need, contact me directly'. Serigne Mame Mor, he comes here every year [for] the parade … if he said that … That's something big … because he's not like, you know, just anybody. You know, he's very busy with the work he's doing … that's like *mashallah*! (NST1 2017a)

A year later, NST president remembered their *dahira's* private meeting with the *shaykh*:

> Serigne Mame Mor, son of Serigne Mortada (he's the one who started the march here in the United States) … he contacted us; he told us to do it our way. Not to follow anyone but do it our way. He told us we will struggle and will see some drop back but to keep going. And he told us that whenever we do our 'day', he is willing to fly from Senegal over here or from wherever he is at to come join us. So, he really appreciates what we are doing. (NST4 2018)

Both interviewees focus on the facts: Mame Mor took time to meet with them separately from MICA; he gave his blessing without which their new venture would be in jeopardy. Mame Mor is not the only *shaykh* to seek a relationship with NST. I was at an NST general meeting[22] where the President mentioned that Modou Kara[23] had left a voice message on the NST WhatsApp group chat. His comment provoked a buzz of murmurs and excitement throughout the room. Kara founded a powerful new Murid movement in Senegal by recruiting a base of support among the disenfranchised youth of Dakar (Kingsbury 2014). NST youth have generated enough energy that Kara and perhaps other leaders will seek their loyalties. 'Conquering the youth'[24] (Diop 1981:81) was part of the original strategy for the creation of *dahiras* in Dakar. Competing for the allegiance of

[22] Jan 21, 2018

[23] Moudou Kara Mbacké, like Mame Mor Mbacké, is a descendent of Shaykh Amadu Bamba. His movement has strong political intentions.

[24] 'Ces manifestations s'inscrivent dans la stratégie de propagande idéologique mise en place par les jeunes mourides ; elles visent essentiellement deux buts vulgariser la pensée du maitre et conquérir la jeunesse.'

Murid youth continues to matter in Senegal and beyond. Just as NST needs the blessing of Mame Mor, he needs them to stave off the threat of alternative Murid movements.

A community for the *talibé*

The second role of the *dahira* is to meet the needs of the *talibés* who live scattered across the city in an often hostile environment.[25] For the *talibés*, the *dahira* offers community and belonging. Murids have 'maintained, strengthened [their] unity and cohesion by bringing together the faithful in the *dahira*: the Murids sing the poems of the master, meeting together to receive the orders of the central administration'[26] (Diop 1981:80). One young woman, a high school student who arrived in New York less than two years before I interviewed her, expressed her need for unity and belonging:

> I was born in Senegal, and I grew up in Senegal. So, I just came in here, and I see Ndawi Serigne Touba, my sister [helped] to create it. So, I am part of it now. I like [that] we're all together. Yeah, we all together, we're talking on the phone, we're like sister [and] brother. And if anyone has a celebration, we help out, because we are like a family, because we just came here to New York. We don't know each other. We just come together and try to find a way, like, to help each other. (NST12 2018)

For many members, NST is the primary circle of relationship and belonging in New York. Older NST members, who have generally lived in the USA longer, embrace this aspect. They place a high value on helping newcomers get started. One of them told me:

> Ndawi Serigne Touba … is completely based on helping the Muslim community and all those people in need in the United States of America. Even if you not Muslim, even if you not in the pure Islam, but you just in need … We willing to help you financially, physically, or morally (NST2 2017a).

Another way that the *dahira* serves the needs of the *talibés* it through singing the *xassaids* and performing *zikru Allah*, these familiar activities provide a way to feel close to God and each other. A significant portion of all the meetings that I have attended and those that I have watched via Facebook Live (offering a way for Murids to participate from

[25] Many interviewees have described discrimination and negative experiences with outsiders.

[26] Contrary to Diop's analysis from the '80s, NST members are not awaiting orders from Touba. Rather they are aggressively seizing the opportunity to position themselves as leaders in the diaspora of New York and beyond. Serving the Murid community in highly visible and even excessive ways is part of this bid to position themselves for leadership. The original text reads : 'Elle a maintenu, renforcé son unité et sa cohésion en regroupant les fidèles dans les *dahira*: les mourides y chantent les poèmes du maitre, s'y retrouvent pour recevoir les ordres de l'administration centrale.'

afar) is devoted to singing the *xassaids.*[27] Novices are welcome to join the circle sitting in the centre of the room. One night I was invited to join the circle of twenty men, each with a booklet from which to sing. Some did not know the words, while others had them memorised and helped novices to find their place. At the end they sang a refrain familiar to all, holding out their hands to 'catch' the blessing. Around the edges of the circle, NST members listened, chatted, or read from the Qur'an or *xassaid* booklets. Whether in the circle singing or just listening, the atmosphere was participatory and welcoming, a Murid space where for a few hours, members immerse themselves in belonging.

Promoting Murid ideology and practice: Service

The third function of the *dahira* is to promote Murid ideology. NST members express this through *khidma* (service), *da'wah*, and seeking to live *yoonu jàam* (nonviolence, lit. 'path of peace'). Service to one's *shaykh*, one's fellow Murids, one's family, and to society at large is the essence of being a Murid because serving the community is serving *Khidmatoul Khadim* ('servant of the Servant', i.e. Bamba) and thus being at the service of the Prophet. NST has focused its primary activity on serving at Murid community events. The women's committee leader of NST says:

> As young Muslims living in NYC and as Murids we have to help out between us, and we have to help out in our community by helping in the organization, by stepping up, by [helping] whoever needs anything and be willing to give our force,[28] our time and our devotion for the sake of Amadu Bamba. (NST5 2018)

This sentiment is expressed by NST members repeatedly. They understand that service to the community shows their devotion to Amadu Bamba. The NST president said:

> We are serving the community … everything that needs to get done because we know that back in the day … we [didn't] see the youth present … old people carried the chairs, set up the tables, control the crowd for the safety and the security and all of that. We relied on the older people. Now given that we see that the NST take over. All the youth get together and help the elders to do the physical job … The youth now carry on all of that and spread it through the media and all the social media. (NST4 2018)

[27] The poems of Shaykh Amadu Bamba praising God, the Prophet Muhammad and containing prayers for protection from Satan.
[28] The English word 'force' being used here with the French meaning, 'strength'.

This member's reflection might be re-phrased: 'In the past, our elders did everything both organizationally and physically to realise community events, but now that NST has taken over, the youth are doing the work.' He also anticipates that their social media 'savvy' will increase their effectiveness. Using the phrase, 'take over' expresses again the underlying intergenerational tensions, the shifting of roles, and the desire of Murid youth to take on more significant leadership.

NST members are using their bodies as weapons or tools, by dressing in matching uniforms and inserting themselves into the middle of the most important activities in the Murid community, the Bamba Day Parade and the *magal,* they forced the community to recognise them as young ambassadors of Serigne Touba. Their service, done with energy and joy, is contagious and visible to all. NST members were present and active in every level of activity from set up, to preparing food, to sitting in and participating in the religious discussions and cleaning up afterwards. Older Murids welcome these young ambassadors.

Promoting Murid ideology and practice: Invitation

The word, '*Ndaw*' in Ndawi Serigne Touba can mean either 'youth', signifying that NST is for young Murids or it can mean 'ambassador' signifying that they have a mission. When I interviewed the president of NST, he left no room for doubt:

> NST is not just the youth you know ... there are going to be people who are way older than us inside. Because when you say Ndawi Serigne Touba, '*Ndaw'* doesn't mean just young person, it's more like 'ambassador' … so all of them feel like they are the ones who carry the message of Shaykh Amadu Bamba. (NST4 2018)

I asked him, 'If I use the Arabic word, "*da'wah*", you have a *da'wah* here?" He replied, 'Yes, you got it right.' (NST4 2018). NST carries a strong sense of *da'wah* for 'lost' Senegalese youth, non-Murid Muslims, and to Americans generally of any background. I experienced a warm and compelling invitation each time I was with them. Furthermore, on multiple occasions, I overheard conspiratorial asides from some of my contacts to their

friends that they were going to make me a Muslim or convert me.[29] The NST President described their *da'wah*, as first and foremost to 'lost Senegalese', but including all people Muslim and non-Muslims (NST4 2018):

> We Murids have an example of forgiveness from Shaykh Amadu Bamba, whose example shows us how we should live in the world. The problem for African Americans is that they do not have an example, they are 'lost'. (NST4 2018)

He, like Mustafa Mbacké when he was in Brooklyn, feels that Murids have a mission to African Americans. It appears that a commitment to practise *da'wah* is stronger in NST than in MICA generally. In a passionate impromptu speech at an NST general assembly, a man spoke about Serigne Touba who never changes; he is always the same.[30] He ended with this plea to Shaykh Amadu Bamba, 'make it such that all who turn to Islam in this country do so because of you!'[31] NST members adhere to Murid tradition and at the same time, bring a critique. They believe that as a new generation with different opportunities, education, and the benefit of their parent's work, they will take the Muridiyya to new levels of success. *Da'wah* and conversion are part of NST's mission. Implicitly it seems they feel the older generation has not understood the American context sufficiently to have an effective witness.

Some NST members advocate *da'wah* yet at the same time hold out tolerance and respect for other religions. I asked the NST vice-president if there are youth who are growing up here who don't practise Islam, and he replied:

> We are very concerned about that. We want to recruit even someone who has nothing to do with Islam, never been Islamic ... Not like you should be a Muslim, but you have to know and at least have some sort of respect between you and the Muslim. And the same that the Muslim should learn more about, you know, Christianity, Buddhism or some stuff so that he can respect them as … that's the life that they live. (NST1 2017b)

Other NST members have also voiced this commitment to respect people of other religions. The NST president claimed that they have members in Senegal who are

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[29] Fieldnotes 14 September 2017 and 27 July 2018

[30] Much like a Christian would say, 'Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever'.

[31] 21 Jan. 2018, Unknown man at meeting, he spoke in Wolof and this is my note written immediately afterwards in English.

Christian. He said that Muslim members tell them about Islam, and they, in turn, inform the Muslims about the miracles of Jesus and yet they all have the same spiritual guide.[32] This open and tolerant approach to living together with other faiths is in tension with the conflicting demands of an aggressive *Baay Faal da'wah* often expressed with active invitations to join Islam. As a non-Muslim in their midst, I was often invited to convert. The *imam* regularly asked me if I remain a Christian. At the 2017 *magal*, one of the NST leaders greeted me loudly with a big hug and an invitation, 'Are you ready to become a Muslim?'(NST2 2017b).

At a community meeting, one NST member, a tall man who works as a bouncer at a club, spoke about being true disciples of Bamba and about how to reach those who are caught up in sin:

> If you want to win a person over to what you are, you must first meet him where he is at. If that is a club with sin, met him there and pull him out, say, 'my friend here where you are is bad, let's go over there' in other words, meet him in what he wants, to get him to do what you want. (Seck 2018)

In his understanding, faithful Murids have a mission to rescue those involved in bad things, in sin. However, the lived reality of ordinary Murid lives contradicts his moral discourse. I spent a day with the producers and cast of Lifeline. At a prearranged location, I met some of them and helped to carry equipment from a 5th-floor apartment to the car that was picking us up. In the trunk was a half-empty bottle of bourbon. While spending the day on set, I hung out with actors and others waiting to perform. The three young men joked about and discussed sex outside of marriage. One asked, how does one balance religion and the feeling that 'you got to have "it"?' The show features heavily themes of sexual and financial infidelities and the use of curses and/or magic charms to prevail against rivals. The NST members claim to be bringing a higher level of morality and faithfulness to Islam, even as the experiences of individual members contradict those claims.

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[32] Field note from 12 July 2018

There is an aspect of the NST commitment to *da'wah* that is performance-oriented and declarative, transforming ordinary places into Murid space. They aggressively claim Bamba's ownership and authority over contested sites. For example, *Baay Faal* members drumming, chanting and collecting *addiyya* on the street in Harlem. A video taken on 116th street, shows NST members marching, drumming and chanting, 'Thank You Shaykh Amadu Bamba, Servant of the Apostle'[33] (Diop 2018). At the 2018 *Magal*, following the first meal, NST men formed a circle and rhythmically walked in a circular pattern singing, '*La Ilaha Ilallah*' a classic Sufi *zikr*. The climax came when they moved into the centre in a tight group dancing and chanting, 'Thank you, Grandfather Cheikh Ibrahima Fall'[34] followed by, 'Bamba owns New York.'[35] Later that same evening, at the beginning of a late-night feast, the exuberance of the youth burst out in the form of a parade of youth carrying food into Salem United Methodist Church, marching in step to drums and chanting, 'This house is owned by Bamba'.[36] The parade was a ritualised 'takeover' of the building, transforming the space into Murid space.

All three of these events seem to be for insiders, not outsiders. They would be incomprehensible to outsiders both linguistically and culturally, which is at odds with their stated goal of outreach to the community and non-Murids. However, it is entirely in line with their goal of reaching the lost Senegalese youth. These powerful demonstrations of Sufi Islam and Wolof/Murid culture performed to the acclaim of the community, many of whom recorded the events on their phones (like I did), serve to re-enforce their own sense of 'being in the truth' and to attract those Senegalese who are struggling with their

[33] '*Jërëjëf Cheikh Amadu Bamba, xadimu rassoul.*'
[34] Cheikh Ibrahima Fall, was a disciple of Amadu Bamba and the founder of the Baay Faal sub-order of the Muridiyya.
[35] 'New York, Bamba *moo ko moom*,' Filmed in at the Black National Theater, Oct. 28, 2018.
[36] '*Gii kër, Bamba mo ko moom*,' Filmed at Salem United Methodist Church in Harlem, Oct. 28,2018 This parade and chanting lasted approximately three minutes. Most of the food had been brought in earlier, this was a staged performance.

identity and wondering where they belong. Writing about public celebrations Diop (1981) says:

> They are much more, for Murids, more of an occasion for the display of power and prestige than ceremonies where non-Murids can take the opposite view of the theses which are exposed there; in fact, they do not give rise to confrontations with non-Murids but serve to strengthen the cohesion of the movement, to seal its unity around the charismatic leader. Psychologically, such manifestations reassure the faithful, demonstrating the truth of his religious choice. [37] (Diop 1981:81)

As stated by Diop, the first and primary community to whom Murids are communicating is other Murids, both faithful and 'lost'. The broader public, New Yorkers and other non-Murids is a secondary yet important audience, particularly for their message about Muslim peacemaking.

Promoting Murid ideology and practice: *Nonviolence*

A third way that NST promotes Murid ideology is the way they live *yoonu jàam*. Nonviolence is an essential part of Murid ideology and a chosen public identity for the New York diaspora. During Ramadan 2018 an NST member was shot in the stomach just outside *Daara Ji* on 116th Street. I learned of the shooting through social media when a Facebook Live feed popped up from one of my acquaintances. He was live-streaming a community meeting called and organised by NST (at the request of the Senegalese Consul General) to address the shooting of a community member and the danger of conflict between Senegalese and other African American youth hanging out on 116th Street.[38] Accounts of the event are unclear; the shooter remains at large, and the young man's recovery has been slow. Arranging a meeting with him was difficult, and when we met, he was wary of speaking to me, but eventually, he told his story:

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[37] 'Elles sont beaucoup plus, pour les mourides, l'occasion d'un étalage de puissance et de prestige que des cérémonies où des non-mourides peuvent prendre le contre-pied des thèses qui y sont exposées ; de fait, elles ne donnent pas lieu à des confrontations avec les non-mourides mais servent à fortifier la cohésion du mouvement, à sceller son unité autour du leader charismatique. Psychologiquement, de telles manifestations rassurent le fidèle à qui elles démontrent la vérité de son option religieuse' (Diop 1981:81)

[38] Zain Abdullah describes the complicated relationship between African immigrants and African American in his book Black Mecca (Abdullah, Zain 2010 Black Mecca: The African Muslims of Harlem New York, NY: Oxford University Press).

> It was Ramadan, and I had not yet prayed. I went to a mosque, and it was full, so I went over to 116th Street, where I prayed. When I came out some friends of mine were arguing with two girls. I told them to stop. They should not be fighting. I got them calmed down. The girls went away, and a boyfriend came back. I started to walk away, and that is when he shot me. I crossed the street and fell on the other side. I don't know what they were arguing about or who they were. I don't remember the person who shot me. (MCM13 2018)

When retelling his story, a second time he said:

> All I know is that it was Ramadan. I went to 116th Street to pray. I calmed down my friends and went to pray. When I came out, God allowed me to be shot. I don't know what they were fighting about or who they were (MCM13 2018).

This event and the way people have talked about it afterwards reveals them wrestling with a violent event as faithful Muslims and disciples of Shaykh Amadu Bamba. The victim emphasised that he was calming down his friends and asking them not to fight. He framed the event as something that 'God allowed', thereby removing blame and the need for revenge. He also denied knowing the persons involved, probably to protect himself from being asked to testify. The president of NST described the community response/understanding of the event as follows:

> I think the police are still [investigating] it but … we are not going to look for him, we are not going to fight back and all of that because that's not what we are taught. How to respond is forgiveness. If we are attacked, we forgive, and we keep going. And also, when you come to us, we show you how to be a bigger man; how to be a bigger person. Shaykh Amadu Bamba went through all of that. Enemies took him from his family and exiled him for seven years and when he came back, he said, 'I forgive all of them. I forgive all my enemies, I forgive everybody.[39] Shaykh Amadu Bamba went through way more than that and why not us! (NST4 2018)

He frames this event and the appropriate response in terms of the example of Bamba who forgave the ones who mistreated him. He also notes that if their leader suffered, why would they not also suffer? This outlook is similar to Christian understanding that: if Jesus suffered, his followers also should expect to suffer. They should model their response on the way Jesus responded.[40]

A woman, one of the founders of NST, recounted her version of the shooting:

> The group that was fighting was another group of Senegalese young men that were around the 116, just chilling there, that was having a problem with another American ... they were about to fight. That's when [he] was coming from the mosque … he said, 'let me try to stop them fighting,' that's when the

[39] 'I have forgiven all my enemies for the sake of Allah, who protects me. I do not fight back or retaliate' (Mbacké 2010:12).
[40] John 15:20, Luke 9:57-62

> gunman pulled the gun and just was shooting at people … he wanted them to, basically, not to fight. That's what brought him to the hospital and thank God he's feeling much better now … the Senegalese consul called NST … to have a meeting with them to try to find a way to get the young Senegalese that are not safe down on the street on 116 smoking weed, selling drug or anything. To take them from the street and get them involved in NST so they can stay out of trouble, that's why we had that meeting. (NST5 2018)

Everyone who talked to me about the event, including the man shot, all point out that he was trying to calm things down; to stop the fight. His intervention was peaceful. Their communal response to this act of violence was to trust the police to do their jobs and to forgive, calling on the example of Amadu Bamba. Additionally, the thrust of the community meeting was not focused on the shooter but upon themselves. Why are young Senegalese hanging out and getting in trouble? How can we encourage them to join NST? What is missing in their education? Older members of the Murid community have told me that there is a problem especially for young Murids, born in NYC:

> There are too many youth hanging out on the street without anything to do, and they get entangled with bad people, gangs and drugs and what not ... even if they're not actively participating in these things they still interacting with those people and get in trouble. (MICA2 2018)

Although some Murids push this narrative, the victim defended his friends who were hanging out on 116th Street, saying, 'That may be true in some cases, but my friends and I don't do that, we are true Murids'[41] (MCM13 2018). NST says that one of their prime missions is to save the 'lost' youth, but there is some disagreement about who is lost or not.

The NST President's motto is: 'Don't wrong others, don't fight, don't pay back'[42] (Samb 2018). He told me about his practice of *Marifa* (Arabic: 'interior knowledge') spirituality and that of Murids in simple terms as meaningful work, service to others, and a nonviolent way of living in the world that he described as 'Seeing God in others and seeing yourself in others and therefore you can't hit them back' (NST4 2018).

The NST women's leader described her way of living the Murid *yoonu jàam*,

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[41] 'Murid *sadiq.*'
[42] *'ñaka toñ, ñaka xulo, ñaka fayu.'*

> Whoever knows Serigne Touba, knows that he was a West African nonviolent leader. We are trying to put all youth, African youth together. So, if you put them together and call them in peace, not in violence but in peace, in nonviolence, we can win their hearts without fighting or without showing them violence. We can stop them from what they are doing now by how we are living the peace … let's say that you and me we are not getting along; someone will go tell the *jëwriñ* (leader) so the *jëwriñ* is going to call us whatever is our difference we will talk about it and then we will let everything go. From there, it's a new life; it's a new us. That's how NST works … NST is about peace--about love--about how to save yourself, about how to love yourself and others, how to care about yourself, how to care about your family, how to care about your friends, how to care about basically everybody, every human being. And our culture too, a lot of American people like our culture and not to say it [myself] because I am part of it, but we have a beautiful culture. (NST5 2018)

At the heart of her description of *yoonu jàam*, is an element of reconciliation. Take the problem to the leader, talk about it and accept his solution, then forgive and go on from there. Her description of *yoonu jàam* includes peace and love, worked out through mediation, forgiveness and caring for self, family, others. She notes that some Americans like her culture and proudly said, 'We have a beautiful culture.' She sees nonviolence as both a cultural and a Murid value. She spoke of winning hearts without fighting, intimating that a nonviolent lifestyle is a form of *da'wah*.[43] Peace and nonviolence is a starting point or a way of looking at the world that fundamentally shapes many aspects of Murid life.

NST members, by their words and actions, advance the narrative about Murids in Harlem. They understand themselves to be disciples of a Muslim peacemaker. Demonstratively they put this into practice. However, individual members challenge the status quo, for example at the NST barbecue one man warned me, 'You can speak against anything except Shaykh Amadu Bamba and the other caliphs. But if you speak against him, look out! His disciples are ready to die for him' (NST7 2018). I got the feeling that this was an attempt to intimidate me. It seemed to make him uncomfortable that I, an outsider, spoke Wolof. He was suspicious that I might be part of the police or government spying[44] on them. Another potential exception to their pacifist commitment is that NST

[43] A nonviolent lifestyle as attractive mission is a familiar theme for Christians in the Anabaptist tradition.
[44] Post-9/11 New York security efforts by NYPD and FBI includes a strong reliance upon informants, Muslim and others, inside the Muslim community. Other researchers doing fieldwork have also experienced this. See (Bechrouri 2018).

members were excited about the interest Modou Kara showed them. Kara's disciples function as a quasi-paramilitary unit. They offer security for his events and are an intimidating force[45] sometimes called 'peace commandos'. The aggressive nature of the Kara movement, if embraced by Murid youth in America would move them out of the favoured status Murids have in New York.

5.4 Strategic ways of acting: Ritual and negotiated power dynamics

NST has chosen to work from within the existing Murid community, to utilize traditional Murid structures, and to faithfully adhere to the teachings and practice of Shaykh Amadu Bamba. They embrace *khidma, da'wah* and *yoonu jàam* as ways they live and interact with the those around them, whether Murid or non-Murid. By choosing to serve the community, a role appropriate for youth, they secure their right to have a voice. I described NST youth as social shifters, who use their bodies as weapons and texts to negotiate social relations and dynamics of power and agency in their community. Now I want to examine 'how' they achieve this goal. Murids in New York have faithfully and successfully employed Sufi and Murid rituals to recreate the Muridiyya in the diaspora. They participate in all the traditional rituals of the Muridiyya (*xassaid, zikr, salat, ziar, Magal, Tabaski, Korite*, *wacc kamil*, etc.) as well as some adaptations uniquely situated in New York, the annual Bamba Day parade and the ritualized take-over of place that happens in church buildings, public places and even claiming all of New York as territory ('New York *Bamba moo ko moom'*). My data supports Catherine Bell's (1992) theory of ritualization theory proposes. Bell focuses on 'ritualization' as a strategic way of acting' (Bell 1992:7) and in this context NST members strategically[46] place their bodies at the centre of the ritual activities of their community.

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[45] Video of Kara visiting his 'Commandos de la paix' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J9eR4eDW-sw

[46] When employing Bell's term, 'strategy' or 'strategic' in reference to Murids in New York or to NST I am using it in the sense of De Certeau's term 'tactic'. Murids in New York are marginal people without power, thus following De Certeau, ritualized agents employ tactics.

5.4.1 NST members as 'ritualized agents'

Bell stresses that the image of the body is 'no longer the mere physical instrument of the mind, it now denotes a more complex and irreducible phenomenon, namely, the social person' (Bell 1992:96). She says that 'we can speak of the natural logic of ritual, a logic embodied in the physical movements of the body and thereby lodged beyond the grasp of consciousness and articulation' (Bell 1992:99). Her understanding is very much in line with the way that De Certeau understands the body and the movements of the body to transform place into space. Ritual lodges in the way the body moves in consent to or with the social dynamics of power ('place' in the writing of De Certeau) and sense of 'common sense'. The ritual shapes the body, and the body shapes the ritual. Ritualization is an act of production, 'the production of a ritualized agent able to wield physically a scheme of subordination or insubordination' (Bell 1992:100). The goal of ritualization is a new person, a new ritual actor who has mastered the ritual and can, in turn, produce new ritual agents. Creating new agents through learned ritualized behaviour is the most fundamental principle of discipleship put in terms of socio-cultural reproduction.

Murids have been successful in creating ritualized agents, Bell's term for community members who can reproduce the rituals of the community in new places. NST members are ritualized agents with capacity to reproduce the rituals of the Muridiyya in the American context in new ways, same yet different. The Bamba Day parade puts this on full display, this is the first generation's significant contribution, employing Murid ritual in new and dynamic ways, for example singing *xassaid*s while marching on the street. Now NST members, through giving themselves entirely to this ritualised way of acting in public have developed new rituals. Ritualized takeover of space by the older generation was subtle, employing the tactics of space making and traditional Murid rituals. NST is creating new rituals which are more overt and forceful to stake claims about their position in American society.

5.4.2 Strategic ritualized actions to gain power

My fieldwork observation of and reflection on the activities of NST and their effects shows that they use their participation in and service to the Murid community to gain social capital; that by serving to the greatest extent (in socially admired activities) they gain approval, power and agency. Bell argues:

> Ritualization is a strategy for the construction of a limited and limiting power relationship. This is not a relationship in which one social group has absolute control over another, but one that simultaneously involves both consent and resistance, misunderstanding and appropriation. (Bell 1992:8)

The two social groups I am considering are the younger and older generations of New York Murids as represented by MICA and NST. In a sense, MICA represents the original Murid migrants, a now rapidly ageing group, the ones with power and control over Murid organizations and activities. NST represents the youth who are bi-cultural, transnational persons, both Murid Americans, and Senegalese-Americans. NST's participation in Murid rituals offers an opportunity to renegotiate power dynamics within the community. NST consents to the authority of the older generation and at the same time resists it. They push themselves on the stage by serving extravagantly in numbers and style that cannot be dismissed or ignored. The older generation is allowed to 'misunderstand' the rise of NST as something that they have promoted and birthed even as NST uses this to appropriate new power and authority in the community.

5.5 Conclusion

NST has chosen to work from within the existing Murid community, to utilise traditional Murid structures and rituals, faithfully adhering to the teachings and practice of Shaykh Amadu Bamba. They embrace service, inviting others to Islam, and peacemaking as ways they live and interact with those around them, whether Murid or non-Murid. By choosing to serve the community, a role appropriate for youth, they secure their right to have a voice. They also draw upon their American context: college education, English language, and skills learned in the job market. They are embracing some aspects of western marriage

and family life. These elements of American culture that they adopt begin to reshape Murid ritual/cultural/communal life.

There are challenges and growing pains ahead for NST. It is too early to know how NST will reshape what it means to be Murid in America or if they will be able to do so. By choosing to work from within, they may be trapped into an internal orientation which non-Wolof and non-Murids cannot understand. What is clear is that the young ambassadors of Serigne Touba have used their bodies to shift the position of Murid youth in Harlem and beyond. Their clothing and their use of religious objects announce their presence for all to see, insiders and outsiders. Their choice to use co-ordinated uniforms at the major Murid celebrations means high visibility and instant recognition. They have chosen to use their bodies to serve their community: set up and preparation for events, cooking and serving food, cleaning up afterwards, organizing the marchers in the parade, doing publicity for MICA. They are also using their bodies to claim contested places, the streets and buildings of Harlem. Besides marching the annual parade, they lead in drumming, chanting and the ritualised takeover of places during community events. In all these activities, young Murid bodies become tools to call attention to things they want to change and weapons to claim and transform places controlled by the powerful as space for Murid youth.

Young ambassadors of Serigne Touba have shifted both their position in the community and the community itself. NST recognizes this by almost hyperactively participating in ritual (possibly entirely subconsciously) as a means to gain social capital or power. Bell says, ‘the ritual construction of power, however, involves dynamics whereby the power relations constituted by ritualization also empower those who may at first appear to be controlled by them’ (Bell 1992:207–8). NST leaders are empowered even as they submit and serve MICA. Both MICA and NST willingly ‘misunderstand’ the dynamic that is at work because both are well served by it. Young Murids have moved

from non-participants to participants, from no leadership in the community to founding and leading a new *dahira* and by taking on new roles in communal rituals.

NST shifted from a position of little agency to one of greater agency. As shifters, they changed the dynamics of the NYC Murid diaspora's relationship to Touba; now when Serigne Mame Mor Mbacké visits New York, he meets with the NST leaders not just the leaders of MICA. NST has made Murid leaders in Touba recognise their presence, even attracted attention from Modou Kara Mbacké a rival branch of authority in the Touba Mbacké family. In the past, the activities of Murid youth were unofficial. Now they have their own 501c3 organization.[47] Another significant shift is a move from the muted *da'wah* of their elders to a much more aggressive *da'wah* that any visitor to their community will experience.

The young ambassadors of Serigne Touba continue to hold the Murid commitments to peace and nonviolence. The ways they live and express their commitment to *yoonu jamm* is a strong element of their community life as Murids. They are participating in the Murid witness that Amadu Bamba was a Muslim peacemaker, an element of their religious order they want to offer to their community and the world. Their renewed commitment to *da'wah* rests in quiet tension with this commitment. How will they reconcile the conflicting demands of an aggressive Baay Faal *da'wah* and religious tolerance? I asked the Senegalese pop musician at the *Magal* what he thinks of NST (his wife is a member). He replied that 'NST wants to have it both ways, the Baay Faal way and the traditional way' (MCM15 2018).

Murid youth in New York are seizing their place within the greater Murid diaspora. The youth of NST are negotiating what it means to live as faithful Murids in America.

[47] A 501c3 organization is a registered non-profit organization.

Their elders shaped the previous 40 years; now, they will shape what it means to be Murids in the future. NST represents the emerging face of an American Muridiyya.

CHAPTER 6: TEACHING NONVIOLENCE IN HARLEM

6.1 Introduction

Sustaining and growing the Muridiyya in New York City, while maintaining their particular commitment to Shaykh Amadu Bamba requires constant effort to avoid being subsumed by American culture and values or by other Islamic expressions. Making disciples includes the multifaceted ways Murids seek to educate their children, to raise the level of devotion of all members of the community and to seek out new converts. Educating children is part of a more substantial need to establish their place in society and to negotiate the reality of being immigrants under the hegemony of American culture and English language. As African Muslim immigrants living in a pluralistic society, which they often experience as in opposition to them, making and sustaining disciples in Harlem demands multiple approaches and determination. Aspirants draw from their understanding of God, Islam and Shaykh Amadu Bamba as they negotiate their position among the different stakeholders in the creation and recreation of ritualized events that, reproduce in America the community activities and celebrations that shape Murid life in Senegal. Their efforts go beyond simple reproduction. Responding to the physical, social, linguistic, and cultural context of being Murid in New York City demands innovation and change. Senegalese Murids in America are becoming American Murids, spiritually connected to Touba, part of a transnational religious order, but with a new local rooting.

Murids in the diaspora, despite challenges and failures, seek to pass on their faith and values, including their commitment to nonviolence, as shown in the multifaceted ways they educate their children. Murids in New York City pass on their faith and values by using ritualized activities as strategic ways of creating new ritual agents. I use Catherine Bell's (1992) theory of ritualization as strategic ways of acting to analyse the meanings and power dynamics of an event organized by Ndawi Serigne Touba to host

Shaykh Mame Mor Mbacké. I also show that this type of event is one way of creating new American Murids with ritual mastery. The ability to recreate Murid ritual events in New York City requires people with the training and experience necessary to play the appropriate roles. Since their arrival in New York in the early 80s, the Murid communities' ability to conduct Friday prayers, celebrate Ramadan, the *magal*, sing *xassaid*, recite the Qur'an depended on people who learned those things in Senegal. Most members of the community were Senegalese/Wolof migrants. The growing number of American born children, along with the realisation they are here to stay causes Murids to seek ways to pass on their culture, language, faith and values to their children.

I suggest that the primary means of passing on faith and values, what it means to be Murid in New York, depends on ritualized activities and events, which in turn create new ritualized social agents. Participation in and creation of these events demands certain essential elements: Wolof and Arabic language skills, Qur'anic education, familiarity with Wolof/Senegalese behavioural and cultural expectations and training in the *shaykh*-disciple relationship. In this chapter, I investigate the strategies of Murid families seeking to give their children a proper education through the combinations of education at home, Qur'anic school and sending their children to relatives in Senegal for extended periods. I also explore how these efforts are only one aspect of a broader community effort to nurture and sustain itself which includes, parents/family, Qur'anic schools, regular Friday prayers, large community celebrations, and smaller *dahira* organized events. My research reveals ways that English is beginning to find a place in religious education.

The Muridiyya value of nonviolence impacts the ways Murids interact with other communities in New York City and wherever else they have settled in America. This chapter reveals the ways that Shaykh Amadu Bamba's spiritual and ethical commitment to nonviolence is passed on to a new generation of Murids in New York. The creation and recreation of ritualized events, whether large or small, serves to pass on Murid spiritual

and ethical practices by reproducing in people's bodies these rituals, thus creating new ritualized agents with the power to renew, reshape and sustain an American Muridiyya. It is this American Muridiyya that has the potential to interact with and potentially challenge American discourses about Islam and immigration. In the next section, I describe family strategies for passing on their Murid spiritual and ethical values.

6.2 Families share and pass on faith and values

In Harlem, Murids frequently talk about the success or failure of families to pass on their faith and values to their children. The challenges of maintaining and passing on the faith, language and values to their children in an all-pervasive American secular culture is a concern that Murid parents share with people of all religions. The challenge is not just about faith. Families desire to pass on to their children appropriate behaviour, Wolof language, Senegalese/Wolof culture, ethics and values. The failure to pass these cultural and religious values on to the children of Murids in New York is the frequent subject of concern about youth 'hanging out' on 116th street. One Murid college student told me his story. He was born in New York and then at age six was sent to live with his grandmother in Senegal. When he was 14, he returned to the United States for high school, first at Liberty High School Academy for Newcomers and then later graduated from Frederick Douglass Academy. While in Senegal, his education was at a *daara* (Qur'anic school). He begged on the streets every day for his breakfast then studied Qur'an. He once ran away from the *daara* with his older brother because they were mistreated and ended up getting sent to a different *daara*. He is thankful that his parents sent him to Senegal and appreciates that he learned Wolof, Arabic, proper behaviour, and Senegalese cultural norms. About the situation of youth his age in New York, he told me:

> Senegalese born in the United States who are not sent back to Senegal for education are trying to be African Americans wearing do-rags, participating in gangs and smoking. Their parents sometimes are proud that their child does not speak Wolof, as if that made them 'real' Americans. Some of them are not American citizens because their parents never filled out the right paperwork. Some of them are dropping out of school and getting in trouble. They lack proper education, education in the sense of

> good proper cultural behaviour. Two weeks ago, someone I know choked his father in anger. (MCM8 2018)

Others have told me about crime against Senegalese businesses. Mustafa Mbacké who lives in Senegal and is intimately involved in the New York Muridiyya opined:

> So, the educational fight, if we are not careful, we will lose them. We will lose them, in the sense that the children of Murids, who were born there, will no longer recognise themselves in the values of their parents. Whereas for me, we have to help them be American and Murid at the same time … But more and more the police are reporting to us Senegalese who do things that are not very clear, 20 years ago, 30 years ago it is very rare to see Senegalese or Murids doing things like that. So if we are not careful, not only we will not pass on but we will not even keep what we had. [1] (SEN3 2018)

In response to concerns like these, the president of the newly founded youth *dahira* said 'the main purpose of NST is the youth that got lost' (NST4 2018). Highlighting these concerns, I present four Murid families and the ways they have chosen to educate their children, attempting to pass on Murid faith and values and avoiding these problems. The four family stories are simplified but real stories. They are representative of the variety of approaches to raising children in the American diaspora.

6.2.1 The family in the corner store

The owners of the corner store only speak to their children in Wolof, even if the youngest generally replied in English before being sent to Senegal like her older brothers. They were sent to Touba to learn Islam, Wolof language and Senegalese culture. Neither of the parents has formal Western education. They keep their children close to home and working in the store where they take teaching proper etiquette seriously. One day in the store, I observed as the father asked his six-year-old daughter for a bottle of water. He called her name, and she replied 'Mbacké!' She went and got the water bottle happily and took it to her brother, who was standing near the cashier window. She tried to get her

[1] Donc, le combat éducatif, si l'on ne fait pas garde on va leur perdre. On va le perdre dans le sens que les fils de Mourides, qui sont ne là-bas ne vont plus se reconnaitre dans les valeurs de leurs parents. Alors que pour moi, il faut les aider à être américains et Mouride à la fois … Mais là, des plus en plus la police nous signale des Sénégalais qui font des choses pas très claire, il-y-a des 20 ans, 30 ans il est très rares de voir des Sénégalais ou des Mourides faire des choses comme ça. Donc, on ne prend pas garde non seulement on ne va pas transmettre mais on ne va même pas conservait ce qu'on avait.

brother to give the water bottle to her father. Her father said 'No, when I ask you for something, I expect you to bring it around through the door and hand it to me' (DSM1 2017c).

A few months after they had sent their daughter to Senegal, to live with her grandmother in Touba and go to school, I asked the mother how her daughter was doing. She said her daughter likes it better in Senegal than in New York. I asked, 'don't the children sent back to Senegal miss their parents?' She replied:

> It depends on the family circumstances. Some families in Senegal are poor, some are middle-class, and some are wealthy. Children whose parents in New York send them home to poor relatives want to return to New York. However, for those whose families are well-off, the children go to Senegal, and they're comfortable in a bigger house with more space, and they end up preferring to stay in Senegal. (DSM2 2019)

Her older son was sent to Senegal at age three and came back to New York at age 16. He told me he was born in New York then sent to Dakar to study the Qur'an. He said 'I memorized Qur'an and studied *xam-xam'* (DSM5 2017). He then returned to New York and graduated from Liberty High School for Newcomers. His mother said he lived like a little king in Senegal as the oldest grand-child in the family. In her opinion, he prefers Senegal to New York, where he is currently in college. She does not know whether he will choose to stay in New York to work or if he will return to Senegal. She is happy with either choice.

We talked about the situation of young Senegalese living in the United States. I asked her about the group of young men I saw 'hanging out' on 116th St., outside the front door of her apartment. She told me that it is a mix of various African youth from Guinea, Senegal, Mali, and other places. She said these are 'youth whose parents neglected their education when they were young, who don't have jobs and don't go to school' (DSM2 2019). I told her they seemed a little frightening to me. She replied, 'Yes, they're frightening to us too' (DSM2 2019). Her two boys living in New York, are instructed, 'not to talk with them, even if they see someone they know hanging out with

them they are not to greet them' (DSM2 2019). Her instructions remind me of instructions found in Bamba's poem for the education of youth:

> Choose, when you seek a companion, [one that is] not stupid, [they should be] neither jealous nor envious
>
> You should only sit near or be with those that will always benefit you religiously and intellectually; thus, you will carry out the [best of] intentions
>
> They (learned ones) said, bring back a Prophetic Statement, [so] that [other] individuals [may] conform to the practice of their friend
>
> Obey both of your two parents; you should be benevolent towards them and hasten to carry out their orders
>
> Keep yourself from all that they prohibit to you, for the Face of ALLAH, and you will then gain more consideration
>
> And whoever is higher than you, among your close relatives (parents), you should be deferent (honourable) towards them. (*Nahju Qada Il Hadji* verses 119-20, 126-128)

Bamba's poem instructs youth to stay away from bad company and seek out those who will provide benefit religiously and intellectually.[2] Although the mother of the family in the corner store did not specifically reference this poem, many of my informants in Harlem repeatedly directed me to this poem in response to my questions about educating children. The instructions in this poem, among others by Bamba, are the foundation of Murid expressions of *ihsan* used in teaching children.

Her definition of education primarily includes, to 'teach your children proper respect and proper behaviour in the home, towards the parents. Teach them not to steal, smoke, drink, lie or talk to those who do those things'(DSM2 2019). Second, the importance of working, whether in the home or the family business, is central to her definition of proper education for youth. Third, was not doing the things that 'God forbids and doing the things that God commands'(DSM2 2019). Fourth, knowing one's own culture and language is imperative, for her it's inexcusable that Wolof parents living in New York would talk to their children in English and deny them the opportunity to learn their native language and culture. These children have a difficult time when their parents

[2] Similar to Solomon in Proverbs chapters 1-8.

send them to Senegal for their education. According to her, not only do some of those children not know Wolof, but they also refuse to eat Senegalese food because their parents only gave them American food. She advises taking children to visit family in Senegal before sending them to live there.

About herself, she said she prefers living in Senegal. Her family is wealthy, and her mother has a big home with many servants. Life was easy for her in Senegal. In the United States, she cooks and cleans and works in the store. She believes strongly that parents shape the behaviour of children and that her role as a mother and wife is an essential part of shaping who her children will become. She believes that what you teach your children when they are young determines who they will be when they grow up. In defence of some of the parents whom she had criticised, she said, 'they're good people, but during the years their children were young they worked too hard out of the home and had no time to care for their children' (DSM2 2019). She also noted that misbehaving youth or youth who refuse to work and go to school is not a uniquely Senegalese problem. Many families encounter this problem, even when they give their children what they think is the best upbringing, some children still rebel.

6.2.2 A family in rural Pennsylvania

This family lives quite differently from the family in the corner store in Harlem. They choose to live far away from other Murids, charting an alternative course, and are not interested in a close connection with the Senegalese diaspora. They live in a small suburb of Reading, Pennsylvania. The mother and father were both born into Murid families in Senegal. They seek to pass on general Islamic-Murid values to their children. Sometimes when I visit their home, the TV is connected to a Murid YouTube channel but more often to Disney. They speak to each other and their children in Wolof, but not exclusively, and sometimes conversations are mixed with English. Their four girls are in the local public-school between pre-k (age 4 yrs) and junior high (ages 12-13 yrs). They do not attend

Qur'anic school or receive Islamic teaching other than what they observe or learn from their parents. They do not participate in American Murid diaspora activities, even though they are less than three hours' drive from Harlem. However, they do make celebrating *Tabaski* and *Korite* special events. My wife and I are often their guests for these celebrations. One year when we arrived three of their daughters (the oldest girl was in Senegal) came running down the stairs screaming with delight. As we entered, I heard the mother say, 'Uncle is here!'[3] They sent their oldest daughter to Senegal for one year to live with relatives. She came back speaking Wolof fluently. The father does not send money to his *shaykh*. He told me, 'my first responsibility is to my mother, wife and children. That is what God requires'(MCM18 2018). He says, 'giving money to one's *shaykh* may be a good thing if it were used for valuable things' (MCM18 2018), but he feels his *shaykh* is too attached to 'worldly things' (*dunya*).

Unlike the family in the corner store, whose young daughter attends the Qur'anic school that MICA runs in their storage room, and whose sons received a strong Qur'anic/Islamic education, this family appears to be passing on a loose assemblage of Senegalese cultural and religious values.

6.2.3 Friends in the Bronx

The father is a Murid intellectual and community leader. The mother enjoys hosting Senegalese friends and relatives on Sunday afternoons in their apartment, sharing large platters of traditional Senegalese food and animated conversation. They live in a two-bedroom apartment, near to Yankee Stadium. One of her sisters lives a block or two away. Another sister owns a Senegalese restaurant in Harlem. My friends in the Bronx have one child, a boy who they sent to Senegal for his education when he was six. He lives with his father's sister in Dakar and attends the Senegalese American Bilingual school. When

[3] *Ton-ton nëw na*!

I stayed with the family for a week, they were frequently on the phone between New York and Dakar, discussing the return of their son to school in Dakar and the purchase of school supplies. On another visit, I met their son at the mosque with his dad, who told him to call me *ton-ton*.[4] That same day he was returning to Senegal, I rode along with them in the car, on the way to the airport. The trip included a stop at the MICA Qur'anic school to say goodbye to his *bajan* (paternal aunt). She gave him a long and wordy goodbye with a gift of money and hugs and 'I love you!'

Unlike many who send their children to a *daara* in Touba, to get an Islamic, Arabic, and Qur'anic education, the boy attends a Western-oriented school where the language of instruction is in French and English. He is following a direction similar to his father's, via a French language Senegalese school system and Senegalese university before coming to the USA and doing further education there. His father also received Qur'anic education and reads Arabic. I do not know whether the boy is receiving Qur'anic education, however, knowing his parents I assume that Arabic and Qur'an are also part of his education.

6.2.4 A single father

This man was my first contact in the Murid community of Harlem and has been a constant source of help and encouragement in my research. One of the earlier Murid migrants to come to New York, he is an entrepreneur, a tailor (now retired), and someone who is well connected, and has friendships with people in high places. One day I met him in a store on 116th street with two of his grandchildren. They were fighting; the boy was in tears even as his sister continued to antagonise him. They spoke in English. The grandfather

[4] *Ton-ton* means 'uncle' in French, but is used as a mark of respect in Senegal, quite different from the use of the word *'ton-ton'* in France.

replied in English with additional comments in Wolof. The woman behind the counter spoke loudly and sharply in Wolof to the children like a mother or aunt might do.

When I interviewed him, I asked him about families who send their children to Senegal to live with relatives at a young age and then bring them back to New York for high school. He replied:

> I am one of them. I did that with my son. I have one son. I told you I have a son with the African American lady. I had a lot of difficulties to raise the child by myself because I separated from his mom. Soon after I married his mom, she had a baby with me, and she started using drugs … the hospital told me if you are not careful, your son will be a drug addict. Because his mom used drugs. I fought very hard, I went to the court [and] I got custody of the baby ... I took the baby, he had five years with me. [Then] I went to Senegal, and I took him to my parents to [learn to] speak the language, to know that there I have family, that it is not only me … I took him there to show him, you have more than me, that he has cousins, there were brothers and a family behind him. … I came back, he went to school there. [When] I brought him to the US, I had a lot of problems with him for school. The school [said], 'your son does not speak English'. I said 'Yes, he does. Kids don't forget anything. It's here' (pointing to his head). But they say, 'This guy does not speak English.' I say, 'It's there, keep him in the classroom. Then maybe later it will come back.' I called the principal. The principal came, and I told him, 'My son belongs in this school.' … Every single day my son [went] to the school. He listened. Finally, they told me, 'Your kid is bright.' … After that, he had some problems in the classroom, the other kids told him he's not American because he didn't speak English. My son came to me and told me, I said to him, 'Don't worry about that, you don't need to prove them you are American, you were born here. You prove to them you are a good person.' … I had a lot of neighbours who said, 'Oh your son play with my son, and he's African and they fight together.' I told them, 'That's boys. I have nothing to do with that.' They threatened to go to the police, I said, 'You can go to the police if you want, but for me, I don't go to the police for two boys fighting, because they are neighbours … But that's kids. they fight, and tomorrow they will come back together.' … and that's what happened. Finally, they go to school together; they go to college ... They go to parties together; they hang out with their girlfriends together. (MICA3 2018)

His son was in Senegal for nine years. Today he lives in New York City and works as an architect. I asked him if he thinks Murids will continue to send their children back to Senegal as he did. He replied:

> That's not Murid! Don't say only Murid. All Africans do that. It's not religious, and it's not only Africans who do that. People from England do that. People from Paris do that. People from China take their kids to China. Everyone wants their children to know their culture and their relatives, that's not only Senegalese or Muridism. (MICA3 2018)

He, like the mother in the corner store, is keen to fit into the broader context of other immigrant communities' experiences of maintaining meaningful connections with relatives back home while establishing themselves in New York. This father highlighted his son's difficulty to relearn English after spending most of his childhood in Senegal and gave voice to what was perhaps even harder, his effort to fit socially/culturally into Harlem when he returned to America. He narrated his and his son's experiences of

conflict and integration with African Americans, the failure of his marriage and the conflict he had with the parents of his son's companions, the principle of the school and his son's fight for inclusion.

6.2.5 Analysing the ways families model and teach their children

Four families, each different and unique in their ways, all seek to pass on to their children Murid Islamic faith and Wolof/Senegalese cultural values. Their stories represent a large portion of the Murid community in New York. I did not interview any of the families whose children are in trouble or 'lost' as some in the community describe them. The parents in the four families all agreed that education starts a home, that this is where children learn right and wrong, religious and cultural values and ethics. All of them speak Wolof at home with their children and with each other. All of them have sent or plan to send their children to Senegal to live with relatives. They seem to view sending children to Senegal for part of their education as essential to becoming a healthy well-rounded and well-educated adult. The transmission of moral and cultural values is taught and caught, living in Senegal for a period time facilitates both means. For the family in the corner store (like others I have encountered), sending children to Senegal is seen as essential for getting a proper Islamic education. Murid families do not send their children to Senegal for the same length of time or to achieve the same goals. The family in the Bronx sent their son to Senegal, but he goes to a French-English bilingual school. The storekeeper's children go to Touba for an Islamic education, living there many years, while the children of the family in Pennsylvania receive an American education primarily and only spend a short amount of time in Senegal.

Children's experience of these transitions between New York and Senegal varies greatly. For some, their transition back to life in the USA can be challenging as the single father narrated. Some families prepare well and help their children to succeed, and other families less so. Murids in New York talk about education in the family as foundational

to gaining Wolof language and culture, and proper behaviour. A majority of all the people I have interviewed either sent their children to Senegal or were children whose parents sent them to Senegal for part of their education. They believe that this is a determining factor as to who will succeed in becoming a well-adjusted Senegalese-American, including the single father whose son struggled to adjust.

Sending children to live for one or several years seems to be the surest way to accomplish what most Senegalese in New York value: Wolof language, Senegalese/Wolof culture, and Qur'anic education. Sending them to Senegal allows them to grow up and learn these things naturally, outside of the powerful influences of American culture and English language. This pattern also strengthens family ties, children sent to Senegal generally live with grandparents or aunts and uncles.

Some of those sent to receive part of their education in Senegal also acquire the skills needed to reproduce important Murid activities in New York. In addition to Wolof language, Senegalese/Wolof culture, and Qur'anic education, some learn how to sing the *xassaid*, others learn *Wolofal*[5] the sung recounting of the life of Amadu Bamba, Shaykh Ibra Faal, and early Murid history. Participating in *gamous*, *magals*, *dahiras*, and Islamic festivals like *Korite*, *Tabaski* in Senegal means they have internalized the rituals associated with these events. Ritualized activities in New York depend on people with the skills, the ritual mastery, needed to produce the ritual activity. A lack of locally trained persons with the necessary mastery of the skills essential to create the ritualized events may threaten the community's ability to do Murid celebrations in the future. Alternatively, without an influx of members from Senegal or trained in Senegal, they

[5] *Wolofal* refers to the writing of Wolof with Arabic script or what is called *Ajami* in Arabic. *Wolofal* also can refer to the practice of singing the history of the Shaykh Amadu Bamba and the Muridiyya, an oral form of hagiography that holds true to the core text of the story but has room for reinterpretation and fitting the story into current events and local context. Much like how the Bible records the ways Hebrew people told and retold their history to make a particular point in their respective times.

would have to alter the celebrations, perhaps switching to English as the primary language for example.

Education at home and through sending children to live with extended family in Senegal for periods of time is one way that Murids in New York pass on their faith to their children, another is the creation of Qur'anic schools. In the next section, I look at the two Qur'anic schools in Harlem and the ways they provide Islamic education and the example of Shaykh Amadu Bamba.

6.3 Qur'anic school education

There are two Murid Qur'anic schools in New York. One was started by MICA at the Keur Serigne Touba house, now running in the storeroom of the corner store because Keur Serigne Touba is under major renovation. The MICA president told me, 'we do our best also for the education. We have weekend classes for the Qur'an. We are trying to help them keep their religion, know the Qur'an, the teaching of the Shaykh' (MICA2 2017). The other school, *Daaray Sopey Shaykhoul Khadim*, in the heart of Little Senegal, has more students, more hours of instruction and offers higher-level instruction than is available in the MICA school. Both follow models I observed in Senegal. The MICA school has a woman teacher, and its feel was much like one lead by a woman in her home near my house in Louga in the early 2000s. She has more girls than boys and all her older students/helpers are teenage girls. Daara Ji, led by male teachers, is more like the formal Qur'anic schools that I visited in Senegal.

6.3.1 MICA school

The teacher at the MICA school is a strong woman who enjoys talking. She is an organizer and former MICA board member. My wife and I visited her school on a Sunday morning. There were perhaps twenty children and two teenage girls as helpers. Our appearance at the door caused a ruckus! Everyone got up and gathered around us. The young daughter

of the corner store owners smiled and waved as soon as she saw me. One boy quickly asked, 'Is it true that you speak Wolof?' I replied, "Yes." He asked "*naka nga def*? "*Mangi fi*"[6] I replied, and everyone murmured with surprise. They wanted to talk more, but we were disrupting, and the teacher asked me to make arrangements to visit on another Sunday.

Although I asked multiple times, she never agreed to an interview, however, in other small encounters, she was helpful. One night, at an NST general assembly meeting, she sat near to me, and we talked while waiting for the event to start. The school she leads offers two classes, one for older students from 9:30-12:30[7] and then a class for younger students from 12:30-3:30 pm. She teaches Qur'anic recitation, along with reading and writing Arabic. She also teaches manners and comportment. According to her, children learn bad manners and language at the public school, something that would not happen if they lived with good Muslim families in Senegal and went to Qur'anic school. Her teaching on behaviour comes from the Qur'an and *waxi Serigne Touba*[8] (the sayings of Amadu Bamba), primarily from the *xassaid*, *Tazawudu-c-Cighar* written by Bamba to teach children *Islam*, *iman* and *ihsan*. She has memorized this poem in Arabic, this internalized text is her primary teaching tool, alongside the Qur'an.

She emphasised that the crucial starting point for the children is learning to share and help each other, in other words, manners and behaviour:

> Many of the children are from Senegal or Senegalese families with good values. Others come from other places: Mali, Bangladesh, America or Guinea. They do not do as well because they do not have the same values. Bamba valued education and knowledge before you can have knowledge you need manners. (DSM8 2018)

[6] How are you? I'm fine.
[7] At the 2018 UN Murid conference, five girls from this class did recitations from the Qur'an.
[8] Serigne Touba (Lord Touba) is a common way of referring to Shaykh Amadu Bamba.

Her perspective is ethnocentric. Senegalese children, in her perception, generally have good manners and those from other places do not. She says she teaches children who are fighting to forgive each other:

> All of Bamba's teaching was about nonviolence. You can use manners to fight bad behaviour. You can talk to the person in a way that you will shame him or her or that will help the person to be a better per person and not repeat what they were doing. If you fight back, then you are spreading the thing you don't want to spread. You have to fight bad behaviour with good behaviour. In the *masjid*, all bad words are forbidden. Children learn these bad things at school and on the street, not from their families. We change the way they talk, by being taught the right way to behave. If you trade insult for insult you are as bad as the other person. I teach you to be a better person. If you educate people, the environment becomes better. (DSM8 2018)

She said that she teaches what her father, a Qur'anic teacher in Senegal, taught her and that she teaches wisdom from Amadu Bamba, which comes from the *sunna* (way of the prophet) and the Qur'an. She told me:

> The teaching of Amadu Bamba is for everybody. Violence does no good. If I respond to your bad behaviour in a way that makes you not want to do bad behaviour again, you won't harm others. It's our responsibility to educate our community and teach them to be trustworthy. (DSM8 2018)

The teacher at the MICA school weaves behaviour, manners, nonviolence, and forgiveness together into a seamless garment. This garment is a combination of the teaching of Shaykh Amadu Bamba, the *sunna* of the prophet and the Qur'an. The teacher at the other Murid school in Harlem has the same goals, even if his methods are different.

6.3.2 Daaray Sopey Shaykhoul Khadim

Daaray Sopey Shaykhoul Khadim is a small *masjid* on 116th street that serves many purposes. The occasion of my first visit was an invitation to listen to the Daara Ji *kurel xassaid* practice at 10:30 pm on a Thursday. On most nights there is a group of men hanging out on the sidewalk directly in front of the entrance. Often there is a table of things for sale ranging from booklets of Shaykh Amadu Bamba's poetry to socks. It was early in my fieldwork, and I felt so intimidated by the crowd at the door that I did not enter but walked to the end of the block without even pausing. After gathering my courage, I returned and entered. Inside, I discovered a group of men with many similarities to the men's group at my church. Eventually, the *masjid* became a familiar,

even comfortable place, where I stopped to rest, warm up, get coffee, use the toilet, meet friends or share a meal. Serving a migrant community, the *masjid*, a place of prayer, becomes a community centre caring for the most basic needs of immigrants, temporary shelter, food, community. It also serves as an active Qur'anic school.

Daaray Sopey Shaykhoul Kadim, nicknamed Daara Ji (the school) is a place of constant activity. Daily from 3:30 - 6:30 and all-day Saturday and Sunday Oustaz (teacher) Abdou Samad Mbaye teaches Arabic and Qur'anic memorization. My first interaction with the school was when I dropped by to greet Oustaz and found him on the floor doing push-ups with children climbing on top of him! Eight months later, I dropped in again because I knew he was back from spending six-months in Touba with his family.[9] Within the *masjid* there were approximately 25 students sitting in little groups, each with a junior group leader. He greeted me warmly with a hug; then he told his students that I had come to visit him at his house in Touba. Everyone smiled and said "Hello!" These interactions set up a friendly relationship for my subsequent observation of his students.

Throughout my fieldwork, Facebook Live was a significant source of information about what was happening at Daara Ji. *Oustaz* broadcasts several times a week. In one live broadcast in May 2019, a month after I had observed his class he introduced the school, the students and his vision with these words addressed to a guest lecturer:

> *Daaray Sopey Shaykhoul Khadim* is in New York, in Harlem. Its purpose is to study the Qur'an and teach it and to teach the youth in the religion of Islam. We have 115 students who study here, divided into three classes on Saturday and Sunday. 9-12, 12-3, 3:30-6:30. From when we opened, 2004, until today this has been our purpose, All the faithful who are committed to their religion have a part here. Part of our purpose is to spread the religion and to unite the prayers of all. We have two students who studied here and memorised the Qur'an. We have five teachers here: I am one of them. We are praying for a new place, one that is ten times bigger than this one. We pray that God will protect us from difficulties. We only want to do what will make the religion of God go ahead. (Mbaye 15 May 2019)

His concise description gives the purpose: study Qur'an and teach Islam, the class schedule, number of students and teachers. Their point of pride is the two students who

[9] During which time I did fieldwork in Senegal and he gave me a tour his home city of Touba and several interviews.

memorized the Qur'an. They have a vision for the future that includes a much bigger building.

On the day that I observed, I arrived at 5 pm there were 20 boys and 24 girls varying in age from 5-18. Oustaz was patiently teaching the youngest students the alphabet, pronouncing 'tau' (ط) over and over again. Other groups of students are working in small groups led by older students. Older and more advanced students were working by themselves. For many of them, English is the first language. One of his advanced students, a teenage girl, spoke to Oustaz in English and he replied in Wolof. He instructed her to help a small boy of five or six.

Oustaz can start reciting the Qur'an from any point. I watched him ask a girl where she stopped. She pointed at the page, he looked for a second then began reciting without hesitation. His recitation went on for probably three minutes. As he moves from student to student, he repeated the alphabet and corrected pronunciations over and over. At the same time, he was often interrupted to write out the lesson for another student. He repeatedly switched between tasks.

Overall, the level of order and good behaviour was remarkable. Even if some were not doing their lessons, they whispered. However, most were actively studying, with or without helpers. Some of the older boys sat in front of book stands holding Qur'ans. They rocked back and forth quietly reciting to themselves. An older girl beside me was using the Muslim Pro app to listen to the chapter she was learning. I downloaded the app for myself and followed along in *sura* 78. She listened to the *sura* over and over, whose somewhat offensive lines cause me to wonder how the words made her feel. 'Nothing to drink except boiling water and pus', says one verse about hell and, about the rewards for the righteous, 'gardens and vineyards and maidens with swelling breasts'. She listened on her phone and read along from her booklet, rocking gently back and forth.

The method of learning at Daara Ji is hands-on and depends on repetition and memorization. Rote memorization is the base of all traditional Qur'anic learning. For the small children, Oustaz has them repeat after him while together they point at the words on the page. Most of the students have small printed booklets from which they are learning a section of the Qur'an. For over an hour nothing changed, all activity went on smoothly, low-level noise of talking, reciting and learning.

Eventually, the noise level increased as students tired. Most stopped even pretending to learn or study, boys begin to tussle, and girls stood in groups talking. Oustaz announced 'either go home or sit down. No running around or standing' Some began to leave as their parents picked them up and everyone began to tidy up. Those who remained ate a meal of grilled chicken and green salad donated by a woman who stopped in with two large trays of food from a nearby restaurant. About the same time, a man arrived to do his prayers. Up in the *qibla* corner, he turned and said, 'Guys, please!' Then began his prayers. This place serves as both school and *masjid*; people must exercise patience. Ten minutes later, people were still eating and the boys roughhousing even collided into the man praying, 'Hey guys, come on!' he yelled, then returned to his *du'a*. Two other conversations, in English, were also going on among the older students. I strained to listen to what they were saying. I could barely hear them discussing LGBTQ persons, 'non-binary, that's how they feel', explained one of the boys. From the group of young women I heard, 'that's not being a Muslim', talking about a type of clothing.

6.3.3 Oustaz: His vision for his students

Oustaz Mbaye, age 39, was born in Touba. He grew up in his uncle's home where he began his Qur'anic studies. He continued his studies in Koki[10] and Dakar eventually

[10] I visited the large Islamic boarding school in Koki sometime in 2007. The school had more than 2000 students. Everything is funded by charity.

getting a diploma and a scholarship to study in Egypt from 2003-2007. Back in Senegal, he started a Qur'anic school but after nine months moved to New York to join his father. At first, he taught private lessons in family homes. Then in 2010, he was invited to teach at Daara Ji. He drives a taxi in the morning to supplement what he earns from teaching. He is dedicated to his teaching and told me about the impact he hopes to make in the world through his students:

> So I tell you terrorism is not in Islam. I believe in Sufism. I believe in Cheikh Amadu Bamba's teaching. And now my children, my students, are growing up and they [are now in a] lot of places in New York City. And I see that the Americans love them and admire their knowledge and their thoughts … one of my students … she covers her head… her university they [invited] her to open a new class to educate all the Muslim kids in her university, her school. So that's a big thing for sure, and I think that the way we teach we make sure to, like to-- touch the child's brain, to open his eyes to what is going on in this Islam. (DJ1 2018)

Oustaz, like many Muslims in America, felt a need to clarify that his teaching is not violent Islam, but Sufi Islam as defined by Bamba. He is proud of his former students, like the young woman who is now a university student teaching and influencing others. He then described what he teaches his students:

> So, you believe Islam, in peace. Islam without war. Islam in the society. Islam in love; that's what I want [for] my students in New York, to go to this way, to live in peace … just act, by your actions you Muslim. You must be nice; you must look good, you must talk good. And when you talk to people [you don't] have to tell them about your religion. Tell people about society, talk about the society, if somebody asks you … What is your religion? This the big opportunity for you, you have dialogue now, you talk. (DJ1 2018)

He teaches his students that Islam is peace and love lived out in everyday life in a way that your actions show your faith. He wants his students to live in such a way that they do not have to tell people about Islam but that people will ask them, 'Why do you act the way you do?', opening up a dialogue. Then he gave an example, telling me his side of the story of an older white American man who came to talk to him at Daara Ji who was influenced towards Islam by the kindness of a Murid fruit seller. After answering the man's questions, he led him in saying the *shahada* (Muslim confession of faith). This was a story I already knew because I had serendipitously interviewed this same man, several months previously, during Bamba days.

After sharing this example, Oustaz continued, describing his vision of being Muslim in America (this interview occurred in his home in Touba):

> But Islam in New York City also, I really appreciate it, even more than my country here in Senegal. And America is my country now because I'm a citizen, *alhamdulillah*. I really enjoy it so; I love it. Why? Because the freedom, the diversity and you know what people saying, just your business, what you do is for you. Nobody asks you what are you doing? Why are you doing this? Nobody says that [they] never ask me. When I pray on the street, nobody asks me. People doesn't come to me like say, what's this--this thing? No, they leave me in my religion, and I practise my religion as I want. [People] respect me. Ok, people are, *mashallah*, people are wonderful and love for you too. Islam in New York City, look at … my school when I just started was 18 people, now we 100 … So, and we are doing this in a society, we just come from immigration path and *alhamdulillah*, they give us this opportunity and even they encourage us to do our jobs.
>
> So, my dream for those children, I want them to grow up in this society of America, be the good citizens, [to be very positive], good Muslims, good Americans, that's my dream. I want to see that everywhere. I even support them to be[come] police officers. And being Muslim doesn't mean nothing--Muslim is just like--a religion. You are Christian, some people are Catholics, some are Jews, so we are a community. We are New York; we are America. That's why America to me, means diversity, in a good way. (DJ1 2018)

This idealized even glorified view of his life as a Muslim in America might have multiple explanations. Quite likely, he wants to honour and flatter me as his guest, given the high value Senegalese place on hosting guests (*terenga*). And, perhaps my presence reminded him of good things about his life in New York that he missed while in Touba. Regardless, when taken as a whole, his comments can be understood as part of the consistent effort Murids in New York make to present themselves in ways that Americans will appreciate. This effort is not false or deceptive, as I note in Chapter Seven, performing peace is about highlighting a significant element of Murid spiritual and ethical values that has always been part of Murid Islam. Highlighting these values helps them build positive relationships with Americans, and a real step towards peacemaking.

Murids desire to pass on their faith and values to insiders, to their children, the next generation of Murids in America. Oustaz connects his Sufi Islam and the teaching of Shaykh Amadu Bamba with his understanding of Islam as peace. He values his experience of being free to practise Islam in New York without discrimination. His desire for his students is that they would take advantage of the opportunity to be good Muslims and good Americans who contribute in a positive way to society. At Daara Ji they are training young Muslims with the nonviolent commitments of Bamba to be good American

citizens. He offered the female college student who modestly covers her head, and who is educating Muslim students at her university, as an example of the kind of contribution that his students can make to American society. He hopes that Islam becomes part of the social context as just one of the other American religions, like Catholicism or Judaism.

Murids in New York are being shaped and changed by the powerful influences of American culture and English language. Some families succeed in making Wolof the primary language of the family. In other homes, children of Murid parents are growing up with English as their first language and Wolof second. Many of the children who attend Daara Ji fit this second group. In the next section, I describe and analyse ways Oustaz and Daara Ji are experimenting with English for teaching the Qur'an and the history of Shaykh Amadu Bamba.

6.3.4 'Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba in English'

The heading of the video that popped up on my computer one evening read, 'Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba in English, From *Daaray Sopey Cheikh Khadeem* USA. OUSTAZ Bashirou Fall October 6, 2019'. This live video of one of Oustaz's young disciples teaching caused me to stop everything and watch the Facebook Live feed from Daara Ji. Oustaz Bashirou Fall wore a white *jalabiyyah* (style of robe) common to Muslim clerics in Senegal, with a heavy hooded *caftan* (type of robe) over the top, and a knitted cap on his head. He sat cross-legged on the floor of Daara Ji with his back to a plain deep green wall. His title '*Oustaz'*, is the same title that his teacher carries. He opened his presentation with a quotation in Arabic from the Qur'an and then began his introduction in English:

> Brothers and sisters today this speech will be done in English, *inshallah*, because *Oustaz* actually asked me to do a program about a figure that is really influential in our lives and he's maybe one of the most influential people in the world, especially in West Africa. And his day of remembrance, I can say, is around the corner. That's why I was asked me to do some, you know, lectures about him and his name is Shaykh Amadu Bamba. (Fall 2019)

He recounted the genealogy[11] of Amadu Bamba and a few stories about his ancestors, including his grandfather Mame Marram, who was also a pacifist. He introduced Shaykh Amadu Bamba as 'a figure that is really influential in our lives and he's maybe one of the most influential people in the world, especially in West Africa'. The claim was presented as an unquestioned fact that needed no explanation or comparison to other significant leader figures. In the 50 minutes' presentation, he recited the family history of Bamba from the time of his grandfather to the beginning of the Muridiyya, when Bamba introduced *tarbiyya* in 1883. He gave details of names, dates and places and variations in historical accounts. There were ten students (boys and girls, mostly younger teens) listening, as well as his teacher Oustaz Mbaye. In the background, a few men came in to do their evening prayers.

Oustaz Mbaye is successfully training up young leaders. He keeps them close to him as he trains them. One time I found him with two of his young disciples at the restaurant adjacent to the school chatting over lunch. Whenever I visited Daara Ji I often found one or both of them there with him, doing errands for him or assisting in teaching younger students. Oustaz Mbaye regularly asks them to do the call to prayer, lead the prayers or perform the Qur'anic recitation. He also allows his disciples to teach. Watching Facebook Live streams from Daara Ji, I sometimes see Oustaz Bashirou teaching in Wolof and his mentor Oustaz Mbaye sitting beside him correcting, helping or pushing him. I have also seen Oustaz Mbaye give young women similar opportunities on Facebook Live broadcasts, getting them up in front of the class to do a report, a teaching or a testimony for the other students. On another Facebook video, Oustaz Bashirou taught, in English, from the *Fatiha* (the opening chapter of the Qur'an) for the English-speaking students at Daara Ji.

[11] He cited multiple sources and presented two partially conflicting genealogies as he understood them from his sources (Dagana Diop and Bachir Mbacke two of the earliest chroniclers of Murid history).

They broadcast these teachings in English live on Facebook. The audience is limited, with only a few likes and shares. The fact that they broadcast these videos says that they are proud of their school, that they want to multiply the efforts of the young teacher, and that they believe they have something to offer the world. However, with so few views, the real audience is not people online, but rather the persons in the room. Setting up a camera and broadcasting live to the world is more of a statement about themselves and their sense of importance or perhaps a desire to raise the import of the moment in the eyes of those who are listening as well as those who are teaching. Although the initial viewership is low, over time it will gain views and it serves to boost the Facebook page of Oustaz Mbaye and the recognition of Daara Ji.

Oustaz Bashirou Fall is one of two young Murids who completed memorizing the Qur'an at Daara Ji. His teacher, Oustaz Mbaye, recounted, with great pride, his story of teaching helping these two students:

> Two students, *Alxamdoulilah* that make me thankful to *Allah Subhanahu wata'ala*, because I think that this is the biggest gift I have yet got from Allah, because that's what I call it. If I just came to the US for this mission, *Alxamdoulilah* … the first child who memorise Qur'an … he's 18 now. So, he didn't take it seriously until the last two years when I came back from Senegal, it was March 2016, yes. He told me he asked, 'I want to memorise the whole book'. I say, 'wow, you want to memorise the whole book!' … I said, 'Ok, if you decide to memorise the whole Qur'an, and you know the Qur'an is over 600 pages, so if you want to memorise the whole Qur'an so I'm going to change my teaching.' … another child was there he's a freshman in university. By the first one's decision, when he heard it, he said, '"Oustaz, me too, I want to'. I say, 'you both!' I didn't believe the last person, but I believed the first person. Okay, because the first person he was almost to the half, finish the half the 300 pages. But the second one, maybe like he only memorized 50 pages. I said, 'how could you make it together?' But, both of them they memorized. The second person memorized in two years, and a very good memorization. He got excellent. Both of them got excellent! (Mbaye Nov 17, 2017)

These two young men continue their training and help in teaching at the Qur'anic school at the same time as they pursue university studies. Oustaz Mbaye told me that Oustaz Bashirou has reached such a high level in both the Qur'an and the writings of Amadu Bamba that he can no longer teach him. The other young man, who memorized Qur'an with Bashirou, was born in the United States and then his parents sent him to study in Senegal for 12 years. He is now a freshman at Brooklyn Tech. He told me Murids his age and younger 'speak mostly English' (DJ4 2019).

Teaching about Amadu Bamba in English is a way of responding to the reality that the first language of many young American-born Murids is English. Experimenting with religious instruction in English is rare among New York Murids. At Murid events virtually all speaking is in Wolof. I have witnessed only a few exceptions: at the UN conference during the first hour while there are non-Murid non-Senegalese guests, and once at the mosque during the Friday sermon I heard Oustaz Mbaye gave part of his message (why Muslims should not celebrate Christmas) in English.[12] Another place I witnessed English used was by two young women, members of NST, who gave presentations at the NST membership day. They stood out because they were the only ones to present in English at that event.

Sooner or later, English will become the primary language of Murids in the United States. The fact that Oustaz Bashirou has begun teaching in English shows that some in the community are ready to accept this reality. Or, perhaps, Oustaz Mbaye simply wants these children to learn about Shaykh Amadu Bamba, and because they only speak English, he must either teach them in English or reject them as students. During my observation at Daara Ji, I did not see any discrimination against those who do not speak Wolof. I watched him and his helpers teaching Arabic and the Qur'an, and they seemed happy to use Wolof, French, or English, whatever was needed to communicate with different children.

Murids in New York are by no means the first immigrant community needing to figure out what to do when younger members no longer speak their language of origin as their first language. My religious community, German-speaking immigrants in Eastern Pennsylvania, faced this in the mid-1800s. In 1850, Amos Herr was the first minister in Lancaster Mennonite Conference to preach in English. 'He told one of his Quaker guests

[12] Oustaz Mbaye seems more oriented to this need of using English but it was not clear why he choose to speak at the MICA mosque in English when normally Arabic and Wolof are the only languages spoken.

from Philadelphia that he met with some difficulties because he preached in English. He said some of the old people charged him with pride' (Leaman 2018:20–21). Many others followed in his footsteps using English in Sunday School classes. According to the preface to a new hymnal in 1875:

> The Mennonites, have, heretofore, performed their religious exercises in the worship of God almost altogether in the German language, it is thought expedient, as the English language has become so prevalent, to have the word of God preached in the church, and the religious exercises in the worship of God performed in that language also (a committee of Mennonites 1875).

When English became the language of worship, the transition was complete. However, Mennonites still hold on to a few nostalgic songs (*Gott ist die liebe and Stille Nacht*) that are occasionally sung in German, even by Mennonites who speak no German at all.

It is important to highlight that Oustaz Mbaye is not the one teaching about Shaykh Amadu Bamba in English. Instead, he is facilitating one of his disciples, an American-born Murid who speaks English with a natural cadence. Oustaz Bashirou spent years studying in Senegal to learn Wolof language and culture, but it was in America that he memorized the Qur'an and received his training as an *oustaz*. Perhaps he will become a transitional leader like Amos Herr, helping Murids adapt their teaching, preaching and presentations to meet the needs of a changing community. He is the type of leader who, should he so choose, who might be capable of helping Murid discourse about sharing Bamba with everyone become a reality.

6.3.5 Analysing the activities of Murid schools in Harlem

Daara Ji claims 115 students, MICA school approximately 40, compared to the 15,000 Murids I estimate live in New York metro area, the number of Murid children in Qur'anic schools is only a small fraction of the total number of children born into Murid families in New York. Both schools also have students who are neither Senegalese nor Murid. From my interviews and conversations with Murids, it seems that families rely on sending their children home to Senegal to receive Qur'anic and cultural education. There are a

few families who hire a Qur'anic teacher to come to their homes and give private lessons. An unknown number of families are unable, or perhaps, uninterested in providing the opportunity for their children to learn Wolof language and culture or gain Islamic education.

The MICA school and Daara Ji continue the grand West African scholarly tradition of Qur'anic memorization, Arabic reading and writing, and oral history. Teaching in English represents a step toward an American Muridiyya connected to Arabic and Wolof traditions and scholarship and at the same time relevant to Senegalese Americans, to Murid Americans. The small attempts at Daara Ji to provide teaching in English fits in to what I observe happening in NST, the emergence of an American Muridiyya that is connected to its past and looking towards a future in America, as fully integrated American Murid Muslims. Daara Ji accomplishes this following the ancient Qur'anic school formula and adding interpretation in English. But even more significant is that they have American born students, following the West African Islamic education programme. Oustaz is opening the way for his students, they, not he, will be the ones who can make the transition to English.

Murid Qur'anic schools only impact a small percentage of Murid children in New York, but those who attend these schools receive instruction from and about Shaykh Amadu Bamba and nonviolence. Both the MICA school and Daara Ji have non-Murid and non-Senegalese children receiving instruction. Arabic reading and writing and Qur'an memorization and recitation are accompanied by culturally influenced spiritual and ethical values. In Chapter Two, I described the way that Bamba skilfully combined positive Wolof cultural and moral values with Islamic principles creating what I called an amalgamation of these sources. This uniqueness is passed on by the teaching of the *waxi Serigne Touba* and Murid history as part and parcel of being good Muslims. Here in these Murid Qur'anic schools appears evidence to support my argument, that Murids have

contributions to make to American discourse about Islam and violence. Non-Murid, non-Senegalese Muslim children are being taught Bamba's non-violent example as part of their Islamic education. The number of children is tiny and the impact only infinitesimal, but here in the heart of Harlem Bamba's spiritual and ethical values are influencing children from other American Muslim communities.

In the next section, I examine another element of how faith and values are passed on within the context of the Friday prayers. Here, like in the Qur'anic schools, there are always one or two non-Murid non-Senegalese dropping in for the sermon and noon-time prayers. The universally known Muslim ritual and Arabic language facilitate the participation of those who do not speak Wolof. My research did not give me any data to ascertain if these visitors know anything about the teachings of Bamba.

6.3.6 Community prayer in the mosque: Keeping the faith

The Friday prayers at the MICA mosque in Harlem[13] represent perhaps the most basic regular assembly of Murids in New York. Scattered across the city by their jobs or the location of their homes, Murids might choose to do their Friday prayers at any mosque that is convenient. However, between 200-300 regularly gather in at the Malian Association building that MICA has rented for several years. When arriving at the building, there are men on either side of the door with black bags collecting money from people and greeting. Inside the door, there is often a woman at the foot of steps raising money for her *dahira*. Inside the prayer hall, there is another man with a green cloth bag labelled '*masjid zakat'* (alms for the *masjid*). People can get a numbered envelope to receive a receipt.

[13] My practice as a Christian visiting the mosque was to seek permission from the *imam* (which he readily gave) and to sit or kneel respectfully at the back of the assembly. I did not participate in the bodily movements or words of the prayer cycle. After the service I would hang out and talk with people I knew already or who introduced themselves. On several occasions the *imam* has asked me to come and sit by him afterwards to greet special guests.

Typically, the people begin gathering shortly after 1 pm, and as they fill the room there is an extemporaneous exhortation about faithfulness or the benefits of Islam. Then comes the call to prayer and a recitation of the *Fatiha.* Next, the Imam gives the sermon, typically first in Arabic and then a full and extended recap in Wolof. Immediately following the sermon comes the pronouncement, *Allahu akbar*! Everyone stands and begins to form up the prayer lines. The *imam* leads the prayer, and all gathered follow in the two *rakat* cycle. One day I watched a cute two-year-old boy in a black and yellow striped *boubou* mimicking his father, who wore jeans and a black hoodie. The boy was making approximations of the motions of prayer, continually checking to see what his father was doing. It is rare to see children at the Friday prayers as most are at school. The majority of people who attend are men over twenty. On days I observed there were never more than 15 women. Within three to five minutes of the end of the prayers, most of the people have left to go back to work. Those who remain stay to help with the weekly *wacc kamil* (reading of the entire Qur'an)[14]. This practice was ordered by Shaykh Mourtada Mbacké when Murids first formed as a community in New York. Generally, about 30 men stay to do the reading representing a significant percentage of men who read Arabic. Following the sermon as people depart, there are often brief announcements and calls for people to give offerings to specific projects of the community, for example, for the poor or the building project. Usually announced by a man holding a black cloth bag who likes to say, *"Lu Serigne wax rek jang ak joxe"* (Only what the Bamba said, study and give).

The education of children and the weekly Friday prayers are essential elements of maintaining and passing on faith in the Murid diaspora. A third essential element is the ritual activities at the core of community events and celebrations. Central to the health and life of the Murid diaspora are the ways they pass on their faith and values using

[14] They use a Qur'an that has been printed in thirty small booklets, each booklet representing one *juz'*, a common division of the Qur'an.

ritualized activities as strategic ways of acting to create ritualized social agents. In the remaining sections I analyse the multiplicity of factors, forces and strategies of creating ritual agents.

6.4 Ritual ways of acting and creating ritual agents

Communal events (*Magals, gamous, dahira, ziar* (to visit from Arabic ziyar)*, ngente* (baby naming ceremony)*, céet* (wedding)*, déet* (funeral)*,* Friday prayers, *Tabaski, Korite*) are of great importance for Murids in New York. The tremendous energy, time and money spent on these community events are sometimes critiqued by Senegalese intellectuals who think that the money and energy might better serve 'more productive' activities like business or education. One of my key informants made this same critique, yet he continues to participate, even if begrudgingly. In fact, he is often on stage in a central role at community events. It is important to remember that many Murids do not participate in these activities or do so only sporadically. Others in the community complain that these activities require too much, or that they give more than they get.[15]

Ritualized activity is a primary force shaping and keeping the faithful involved and committed. Ritual is central to understanding how Murids pass on their faith to the next generation. In what follows, I will review Catherine Bell's theory on ritual and practice, describe a minor event organized by NST and engage Bell's ritual theory to describe and understand what the ritual activities of this event achieves for NST and Murids in New York City.

Catherine Bell (1992) describes ritualization as a 'strategic way of acting' (7). Where 'ritualization is a strategy for the construction of a limited and limiting power relationship. … that simultaneously involves both consent and resistance,

[15] Themes of giving, keeping and exchange are explored by Beth Anne Buggenhagen in several of her works.

misunderstanding and appropriation' (8). This definition focused on the understanding of ritual as negotiating power relationships is different than previous anthropological interpretations that viewed ritual as the working out of social conflicts to regain unity (Geertz 1973) or as a way to understand 'a generic bond between men' and 'human kindness' to use ritual activities as portals for understanding what is common to all people (Turner 1995:128). Berger (1967) saw religious ritual as an instrument for 'reminding' and 'making present … fundamental reality-definitions' and as 'theology embedded in worship' (40). And for McGuire (2002) 'Ritual consists of symbolic actions that represent religious meanings' (17). Bell sees ritual through the lens of social cohesion of the individual with the group where 'rituals and symbols allocate identity' (54) to children.

Bell draws on Marx and Bourdieu to describe practice as the basis from which to describe ritual activity. Human practices involve situationality, strategy, misrecognition, and the motivational dynamics of agency (Bell 1992:81–83). She uses Gramsci's definition of hegemony to recognise 'the dominance and subordination' that are part of peoples 'practical and un-self-conscious awareness of the world'. In her theory, the lived experience of power is that 'hegemony is neither singular nor monolithic; to be at all it must be reproduced, renewed, and even resisted in an enormous variety of practices' (Bell 1992:83).

Bell adopts Bourdieu's understanding of the body and practical mastery to say 'we can speak of the natural logic of ritual, a logic embodied in the physical movements of the body' (Bell 1992:99). This is reminiscent of De Certeau (1984) and his idea that it is the body moving through 'place' that creates 'space'. Bell sees in ritualization 'an act of production--the production of a ritualized agent able to wield physically a scheme of subordination or insubordination' (Bell 1992:100) calling this the 'strategic manipulation of "context" in the very act of reproducing it' (Bell 1992:100).

Ultimately Bell offers a way of rethinking ritual as practice, something acted out 'in space and time through a series of movements, gestures, and sounds, effectively structure and nuance an environment' (Bell 1992:141) again reminiscent of De Certeau. She says, 'The goal of ritualization as a strategic way of acting is the ritualization of social agents' endowed with ritual mastery, 'capable of reinterpreting reality in such a way as to afford perceptions and experiences of a redemptive hegemonic order' (Bell 1992:141). Ritual mastery says Bell, ' enables the person to deploy schemes that can manipulate the social order on some level and appropriate its categories for a semi-coherent vision of personal identity and action' (Bell 1992:215).

After describing how NST hosted a *ziar* (from Arabic, "to visit") in honour of Shaykh Mame Mor Mbacké during Bamba Days, I discuss this event in light of Bell's approach to ritual. The actions and interactions in this meeting reveal some of the inner workings of ritualized behaviour in the Murid diaspora of Harlem.

6.4.1 NST Ziar for Mame Mor Mbacké

Ndawi Serigne Touba advertised on Facebook, 'NST Day, July 30, Honorable Guest: Serigne Mame Mor Mbacké ibn Serigne Mourtada Mbacké 5 pm at 250 W 127th St.' When I arrived at 5:30 pm, my shirt soaked with sweat on that hot July evening, the door to the public-school building was locked, and there was no sight of any participants. I walked back to 125th street and went into Modell's Sporting Goods to cool off in the air conditioning. Inside I called an NST member who gave me the new location, the Malian Association building where MICA holds the Friday sermon and prayers. Arriving at 18:30, I was in time to see people spreading out mats and rugs to cover the floor. Five people were involved in selecting a chair for the guest of honour. They tested several unlikely possibilities. One chair was selected and covered with several prayer rugs. A man tested the chair, rejected it and tested another. While I watched the NST president arrived, and I greeted him. He seemed happy to see me and wondered how we had missed

seeing each other at the Bamba Day Parade two days earlier. I asked permission to attend their event and he replied, '"Of course! you are very welcome!'

Finally, they settled on a chair but continued to arrange and rearrange the 3-5 prayer rugs covering the old chair and to test it repeatedly. Hosting Shaykh Mame Mor Mbacké is a major event. More often, he is hosted by the older and wealthier members of the community, for example, in the large and well-furnished apartment of the corner store owner on 116th street or like the *ziar* I went to in 2016 in a business man's home where guests showed their prestige by their beautiful many-layered clothing and a *griot* escorted people into the bedroom in small groups to get a blessing from the *shaykh* ensconced among pillows on the bed. The setting of the NST *ziar* is, by contrast, in the Malian Association building, a rented hall entered through the doorway of a small boutique, then up a dark staircase to a large room with things stored around the edges.

At 18:42 the Shaykh arrived, heralded by a singer only 20 seconds before he appeared. The Shaykh took his place in the chair, and people came to greet him on their knees, taking his hand and touching their forehead to it. The singer who heralded his arrival continued to sing without pause. People crowded to the front for a touch and a blessing as they arrived then joined the crowd seated on the floor on mats and prayer rugs, the temperature in the room climbing steadily as the numbers increased. A young couple arrived together, and I watched as the father held out their baby girl in a beautiful dress to the Shaykh. He touched her tenderly, smiled at her and offered a blessing which ended with a 'whoof', a puff of breath blown directly on her. After receiving additional touches and words from the Shaykh, the parents withdrew and soon left the building appearing happy and satisfied.

Shortly after the evening prayers, Mame Mor Mbacké spoke through his *griot* who travels with him wherever he goes. After the usual invocations of God's protection from Satan, his message was about avoiding the temptations presented to men by women. He

also urged them to complete the renovations on the Ker Sëriñ Touba. At the end of his message, people extended their hands and the Shaykh prayed for them, ending by blowing upon them to impart his *baraka*. Immediately the *kurel* began their first *xassaid* as the shaykh went to inspect the food for the event, offered by three men in suits, representatives of the Senegalese government. Video cameras filmed every move, and many men pushed in close to listen to the Shaykh's comments. Mame Mor travels on a diplomatic passport, as an official representative of Senegal. After a prayer with the men in suits, the Shaykh returned to his seat. A continuous line of people sought the Shaykh's blessing, some seeking only a touch and a blessing while others took time to voice their problems or make a request.

Eventually, I found myself sitting beside the Shaykh's *griot*, and I mentioned that I appreciated the Shaykh's address at the UN two days earlier. He had made a strong statement about the situation of refugees in the world and the fact that Muslim nations are not doing their part to care for and welcome refugees, not even Muslim refugees. The *griot* and I talked about issues related to refugees and migration. The *griot* mentioned that in the West where there has been a Christian influence, people put programmes in place to care for refugees and immigrants. I told him this is a legacy of knowing the ways of Jesus and his teaching. He replied, 'Yes, it is, and I am a believer in Jesus. I am a Christian because the Qur'an commands me that I must be a believer and follower of Jesus'[16] (MCM24 2019). Our conversation got interrupted by Imam Khadim Bousso's speech on behalf of NST and the Shaykh's response, following which he continued receiving and blessing people, eventually departing shortly after 9 pm.

[16] In the introduction I mentioned a bricklayer friend in Senegal who believed in the death and resurrection of Jesus and in the Qur'an and Muhammad. Here again appears the complex and diverse nature of belief and the blurring of lines between Islam and Christianity that I encountered in my research.

6.4.2 Trance and successful ritual

After the Shaykh left, the *Wolofal* singer with a resonant voice who first heralded the arrival of the Shaykh began singing again, a narration of portions of the life of Shaykh Amadu Bamba and sacred Murid history. The effect of his singing was that emotion overcame two persons. One knelt on the floor sobbing silently for 30-45 minutes. Occasionally people went to him and tried to console him. Later, another man suddenly cried out and jumped up. Six men grabbed him and held him down before he could hurt himself. While people restrained him, the singer offered prayers for protection against Satan. It took about five minutes to get things back under control.

When everything was over, as people began putting things away, I had a chance to ask the leader of the Daara Ji *kurel* what happened to the man who cried out while men held him down. He said:

> He had too much emotion in his spirit and couldn't take it. This is very common with Baay Faal singing, some Murids run and bash their head against the wall, others in the time of Amadu Bamba would drink boiling water without any negative effects, other people cry. I sit on the floor and cry when this happens to me. It is a spiritual emotion, going to another level. (NST13 2019)

I asked him, 'Do people desire to have this experience?' He said, 'Yes, they do desire it. It's the same if you go to a church, and you see people excited about Jesus Christ and feeling very high spiritually'(NST13 2019). Trances as a response to the presence of one's *shaykh* or *zikr* are common in Sufism. Charlotte Pezeril's (2008) description of trances confirms my observations and the *kurel* leader's interpretation of what happened. 'Trance can manifest itself in different ways among the Baay Faal: by crying, convulsions and even fits of violence (flogging, blows to the head, etc.). [...] The Baay Faals interpret these states as an excess of divine light'[17] (Pezeril 2008:199).

[17] La transe peut se manifester de différentes manières chez les Baay Faal: par de pleurs, des convulsions et même des accès de violence (flagellations, coups sur la tête, etc.). [...] Les Baay Faal interprètent ces états comme des excès de lumière divine (Pezeril 2008:199).

It appears that the *ziar* and the accompanying rituals were successful: a renewal of allegiances between *shaykh* and disciples, the transfer of *baraka*, and a reaffirmation of the community. NST gained status in the New York diaspora by hosting the event and at least two aspirants entered what they understood to be new levels of gnostic union with God through the trance.

Throughout this chapter, I focused on the ways Murids rely upon Wolof language and cultural knowledge, traditional Qur'anic education, the history and teachings of Bamba and in-depth understanding of the Sufi *shaykh*-disciple relationship. It may appear that in New York, Murids are simply reproducing ritualized events and Islamic education from Senegal. However, this is not simply the case as, context and location matter. Many of the events as celebrated in New York City are shortened, for example, the New York celebration of the *magal* is one evening/night, whereas in Senegal it is celebrated over three to five days or more. As noted elsewhere, events in New York City are much quieter because amplification and broadcasting into the street are prohibited. Events are also much smaller because the pool of potential attendees is less. The *ziar* for Mame Mor Mbacké was in a rented building and the food was catered in aluminium trays. In Senegal, it would be in a wealthy person's home or a large tent in a public place. There the food would be provided by the people hosting the event and cooked in large cauldrons over open fires in the street.

Understanding the dynamic interactions occurring at the NST *ziar* for Mame Mor Mbacké requires an understanding of where in the global Muridiyya the event was situated. First, it is within the Muridiyya diaspora of New York City comprising perhaps 15,000 people. Second, the *ziar* occurred during Cultural Weeks Shaykh Amadu Bamba July 24-30, 2019. Other events happening in the same week are the Bamba Day Parade, the assembly in African Square and a conference at the UN building. During this week other *dahiras* host *ziars* for Mame Mor Mbacké, there are fundraisers and Qur'anic

readings as well, not to mentions various private meals and meetings in homes. The NST *ziar* was competing for time, space and energy from the community as well as the *shaykh*. In the next paragraphs, the focus is on the event itself and the dynamic plays of power and ritual within the event.

The organizers had hoped to host this event at a more agreeable physical location, the public-school building, but were unsuccessful, as they told me that it was too expensive, and they did not find the funds needed. Although the physical location of the event, inside the drab and tired Malian Association hall, was not ideal, NST members were resourceful, playing with combinations and re-combinations of familiar ritual elements of Murid life. These enabled them to create a ritualized space:

> Ritualization is a way of acting that is designed and orchestrated to distinguish and privilege what is being done in comparison to other, usually more quotidian, activities. As such, ritualization is a matter of various culturally specific strategies for setting some activities off from others, for creating and privileging a qualitative distinction between the 'sacred' and the 'profane,' and for ascribing such distinctions to realities thought to transcend the powers of human actors. (Bell 1992:74)

The NST *ziar* became a sacred space, set apart from ordinary life, by using posters, by dressing in Senegalese *boubous*, through the mats and prayer rugs covering the floor for people to sit upon, by the festival food, the greetings and the many people gathered in one place. Also present was the *kurel xassaid* from Daara Ji and a *Wolofal* singer from Senegal (a special guest). Many other events throughout the year in Harlem have only posters to represent the presence of the *shaykh*, but on this day they had a living descendent of Amadu Bamba, Shaykh Mame Mor Mbacké present in their midst. It is the presence of the *shaykh* that makes this event powerful. There is a learned and stylized flow to the ritual of the *ziar*, the main point of it all is contact with the *shaykh*, a renewal of one's allegiance to the *shaykh* and receiving a fresh impartation of the *baraka* of Bamba that is understood to flow through him. All the elements, when taken together, structured the space to achieve its ends. As Bell wrote:

> What ritualization does is actually quite simple: it temporally structures a space-time environment through a series of physical movements (using schemes described earlier), thereby producing an arena

> which, by its moulding of the actors, both validates and extends the schemes they are internalizing. (Bell 1992:109)

The main thing that the *ziar* 'does' is the creation of ritualized social agents, who through the movements of their bodies internalized and validated a Muridiyya scheme of meaning and acting.

Throughout the *ziar,* the interactions displayed power differentials and power negotiations. Picture the continuous line of aspirants on their knees with hands outstretched seeking the blessing of the shaykh, seated on a chair slightly higher above them, who takes their hands and spits into them as he speaks a few words. The young family I witnessed holding out their baby exemplifies this perfectly; it is the lesser who is blessed by the greater. And yet, hidden in this display of power and misconstrued by everyone is the reality that if there was not a line of people seeking his blessing, the *shaykh* would be powerless. The exchange that happens as the kneeling people meet the *shaykh* is a renewal of the pact of allegiance upon which they both depend.

Another power dynamic worked out in public is the place and power of this new *dahira*, NST. They, among the 30 other *dahiras* in New York, secured the presence of the shaykh. NST hosted the *ziar*, but community leaders from MICA came and participated. Many people from other *dahiras* who wanted to get the *shaykh's baraka*, came to the event hosted by NST. Hosting the Shaykh was a significant coup for NST. They did not do the event by themselves, or in opposition to MICA, and other groups also hosted the Shaykh during Bamba Days, but they had one of his few nights in Harlem uniquely given to them.

Ritualized events like this *ziar* are the primary way that Murids sustain the faith and values of the community and pass them on. These events serve to create ritualized agents who can reproduce the rituals of the Muridiyya. All the elements and players that made the *ziar* a success came from Senegal or though people trained in Senegal. Mame Mor Mbacké is the grandson of Amadu Bamba. The *Wolofal* singer is a special guest from

Senegal and the *griot* amplifying the *shaykh* also came from Senegal. The *kurel xassaid* is led by singers who were born and learned their singing in Senegal. They practise twice weekly, however, some of the younger members are now learning the art in New York City.

The practice of renewing pledges to the *shaykh* and getting his blessing is at the core of any Sufi community anywhere in the world, and the way it happens among the Muridiyya is simply a variation on an old tradition. Sufis everywhere seek, through their *shaykh* and the practices of *zikr* and *sama* (the *xassaid* and the *Wolofal* singers are variations on ancient Sufi traditions of *sama*), to advance to higher levels of spiritual achievement or higher levels of nearness to God, gnosis or *fana* (annihilation). At this event, at least two of the people achieved some level of this desired experience. The NST members successfully created a ritualized event that allowed some individuals to gain Sufi achievement. They created and hosted the *ziar*, and in the process, increasing their status in the community and successfully creating new ritualized social agents. They both showed and increased their practical mastery of Murid Sufi ritual events.

6.5 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I contended that passing on faith and values, what it means to 'be Murid', depends on ritualized activities and events which in turn create ritualized social agents. Meaningful participation[18] in these events, as the community exists in 2020, demands at a minimum the ability to speak and understand Wolof. The creation of these ritualised events also requires specialists with Arabic language skills, Qur'anic education, *xassaid* and *Wolofal* singers, familiarity with Wolof/Senegalese behavioural and cultural expectations, and training in the *shaykh*-disciple relationship. My analysis shows that, up

[18] I interviewed four converts who attend Murid events but continue to feel like outsiders, even through they have pledged their allegiance to a Murid *shaykh* and consider themselves Murids.

until the present, the community relies on people learning these skills in Senegal; whether it is Senegalese migrating to New York or American-born Murids going to Senegal for part of their education.

Parents and families care about preserving and sustaining a Murid understanding of Islam through the teachings of Amadu Bamba. Parents teach their children at home by both word and deed. Families pursue many strategies to achieve this, whether sending their children to Senegal to live with a relative for part of their education or sending them to Murid Qur'anic school in New York. Some families are less successful in this, and their children are not learning Wolof or Murid Islam.

Qur'anic schools are one response of Murids in New York who desire to pass on their Islamic faith and Murid ways to children. My research shows that the leaders of the two schools researched and observed carry a strong commitment to the teachings of Shaykh Amadu Bamba, including clear articulations of his ethical practices of nonviolence. Both schools have Murid students whose first language is English. The Oustaz at Daara Ji recently began offering some teaching in English about Bamba through two of his successful graduates.

Ndawi Serigne Touba hosted the Shaykh officially designated as the representative of Touba to the diaspora in a highly ritualized event, the *Ziar* of Mame Mor Mbacké. Through the *ziar* multiple sources and levels of power were subtly (or not) negotiated and manipulated. The ritualized renewal of allegiance between disciple and *shaykh* was the main event, in appearance seeming to be all about submitting to and seeking blessing from the *shaykh* but at the same time, demonstrating that the *shaykh* becomes meaningless without disciples. NST gained influence and power with the *shaykh's* presence at their event, with MICA and vis-à-vis other *dahiras* who did not host the *shaykh* and needed to attend the NST *ziar* if they wanted to access his *baraka*. The *ziar* was also about connecting the disciple with the divine. The event featured powerful ritualized formulae:

the creation of a Murid space, the singing of the *xassaid*, the bodily presence of a direct descendant of Amadu Bamba and the *Wolofal* singer recounting the history of Bamba and the early Murids. The combination of these was enough for two members of NST to enter trance states, gnosis, the desired goal of aspirants who want to gain a higher spiritual level.

Murids in New York use ritualized activities as strategic ways of acting to create new ritual social agents. Participation in the *ziar* schools the bodies of the participants to different degrees, according to their level of participation and knowledge. All are shaped by the ritual even as they, in turn, reshape it. Context and location matter, the fact that the ritualized event was in Harlem and organized by young mostly American-born university educated NST members (most of whom have part of their education in Senegal and part in the USA) means they shaped it in small ways to the American context. Moulded by the ritual and at the same time moulding the ritualized activities of the *ziar* NST strengthened its position in the Harlem Murid community. They also continued the process of creating new ritual agents who can in the future recreate the ritual.

Finally, one of the questions asked in this research has been what do the Murids in New York have to contribute to American discourse about immigration and the place of the Muslim American community in society. Many Murids would say what I have paraphrased here from Oustaz Mbaye:

> America is my country now because I'm a citizen. A*lhamdulillah*, I love it! Why? Because of the freedom of religion. My dream for the children I teach is that they grow up in this society, be the good citizens, good Muslims, and good Americans, that's my dream. I want to see them get good jobs, maybe become police officers. Being Muslim is just like any other religion. Some people are Christian, some are Jews so we are a community. We are New York. We are America.

This idealized vision of freedom of religion, as expressed by a Muslim immigrant, now a naturalized citizen, offers the portrait of American Muslims that is rarely seen by most Americans. The Facebook video of his graduate, Oustaz Fall, teaching a group of young English-speaking American-born Murid children about the life of Shaykh Amadu Bamba offers a new way of visualizing American Muslim immigrant communities. This image

potentially offering material for initiating new conversations about what Muslim immigrants may offer American society. His teaching represents a possible future in which young American Muslims receive teaching on Islamic nonviolence through the story of an African Muslim peacemaker.[19]

[19] From a placard in the 2018 Bamba Day parade.

CHAPTER 7: SHARING NONVIOLENCE WITH THE WORLD

7.1 Introduction

The overarching argument of this dissertation is that in the context of an American discourse about Muslim immigrants and Islam that tends to be dominated by fear and mistrust, the Muridiyya open alternative conversations. These disciples of Shaykh Amadu Bamba demonstrate a lived practice of Muslim nonviolence in the heart of New York City. In the previous chapters, I explored the origins of this nonviolence in the life of the founder and the Sufi order he started. Then I looked at the way his followers in the diaspora create Murid space in the city patterned after the way Bamba made Murid space under house arrest in Diourbel. My research discovered the existence of a Murid youth movement committed to nonviolence and explored ways they are beginning to discover what it means to be American Murids. This theme continued through investigation of how Murids in the diaspora pass on their spiritual and ethical values and practices to insiders. Now, this chapter analyses Murid desires to share their faith with the world.

In this chapter, I show that Murids in New York desire to share their values with the world but often find themselves in an echo chamber, speaking mostly to each other, not outsiders. If they talk to the world, they are often not heard or understood. I take Shaykh Abdoulaye Dièye as an example of someone who successfully pioneered ways to share Bamba's teaching with non-Murids and Westerners. His example provides the backbone of my argument that Murids in New York share their spiritual and ethical values with outsiders following patterns first established by Shaykh Abdoulaye Dièye. Comparing Murid activities in Harlem to Dieye's example helps me to identify and evaluate various Murid approaches to outsiders, past and present, including interfaith activities and the annual Shaykh Ahmadou Bamba Cultural Weeks celebrations. I examine other ways Murids in the diaspora communicate with non-Murids through

exhibitions, academic writing and sharing coffee. *Daw'ah* and conversion are also evaluated. Finally, I offer a thick ethnographic description of an NST event followed by an analysis of the balance of discourse and practice in their interaction with outsiders.

Before evaluating the diverse activities of the New York Muridiyya and the ways they seek to share with outsiders I begin by describing the context of the global discourse about Islam, a contested theological-social-political space that is difficult to navigate. Yet, Murids seek a voice within this contentious discourse believing they have a contribution to make.

7.1.1 Entering a global discourse about Islam

What might Murids contribute to the global discourse about the meaning of *jihad* and Islam? Might they influence other religious traditions towards nonviolence or potentially shift the negative discourse found in both scholarship and popular media concerning Islam and violence? Some non-Murid writers express hope that Murids have something to share which would benefit the global community, like this article on the website of The Economist, 'the Mourides might have a lot to teach the rest of the world—not only about how to respond to globalisation, but how to practise religion in a peaceful way' (Judah 2006). Or the authors of a paper titled, "Contextualizing "Muridiyyah" within the American Muslim Community" who state:

> It is necessary to put the Muridiyyah's wealth of scholarship and literary production at the crossroads of the international debate on the Islamic discourse. Sheikh Amadou Bamba's treatises on *jihad* and violence, not only addresses many of these issues, but his life story also embodies the applications of the proper normative teachings of Islam. With the challenge of reconciling the local and international dimensions of Islam, there is also the issue of being an American Muslim and a Murid *talibe.* (Lo & Nadhiri 2010:239)

These authors see the potential value of bringing the Muridiyya into the 'international debate on Islamic discourse,' a conversation that tends to be dominated on one side by Islamists and the other by those that denigrate any attempt to understand Muslims on their terms or to recognise nonviolent Sufi traditions as legitimate expressions of Islam. An example of this is contained in the following quotations from Devin Stewart, Professor

of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Emory University, criticising Carl W. Ernst, a leading modern scholar on Sufism:

> Ernst characterises *jihad* as 'struggle for truth' and not 'holy war' and claims that it only means a military struggle against evil opponents secondarily (Following Mohammed, p. 31, 117-118). This is blatantly incorrect and adopts the argument of apologists uncritically, flying in the face of the use of the term *jihad* and its derivatives in the Qur'an, in the legal tradition and in Muslim societies all over the world. (Stewart 2018:166)

Stewart then continues, rejecting the basic definition of *jihad* as 'the struggle against one's lower instincts' and asserting that the primary meaning is 'holy war':

> Reference to *jihad al-nafs* the struggle against one's lower instincts, *al-jihad al-akbar* the greater (moral) struggle, etc. is certainly part of the tradition, but this cannot be construed as the dominant meaning of *jihad* in Islamic tradition by any stretch of the imagination. Based primarily on a hadith frequently cited in ethical literature, *jihad al-nafs* is decidedly the secondary concept, and the commonly understood meaning of *jihad* is war, just war, holy war or some equivalent. (Stewart 2018:166)

Stewart downplays the validity of ethical Sufi literature, insisting that *jihad* as holy war is the legitimate primary definition of *jihad*. Islamists in West Africa also reject Sufi traditions that prioritize *jihad al-nafs*. 'Contemporary Salafis in the Sahel-Sahara region aim to delegitimize Sufism as a heterodox interpretation of Islam. At the same time, Salafis embrace the legacy of the Puritan reform of the Sufi scholars[1] of the 1800s by effectively "Salafizing" their narratives' (Kassim & Zenn 2017:87). AQIM, Ansar Dine, and Boko Haram embrace Salafi reinterpretations of West African Sufi history to legitimize their current claims, presenting themselves as 'heirs of the *jihadist* legacy and resistance against colonial rule that was led by the Sufi scholars of the 1800s' (Kassim & Zenn 2017:87).

It is in the context of this global discourse on Islam that Murids believe they have something to contribute. In the introduction to 'Report on the 1st International Colloquium of the Grand *Magal* of Touba on Sufism', the editors write:

> Sufi streams, beyond the basic principles of Islam, emphasise moral and spiritual values and the perfecting of the carnal soul … Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba *Khadimou Rassoul* initiated an unprecedented path, in the wake of the prophetic tradition of Mouhamed (PSL). In the current context of globalisation, conflicts and crisis, where each people is called to make its contribution to building a better world, a world of peace, stability and understanding, without giving up its identity, it is important to ask

[1] The authors are referring to Umar Taal and Uthman dan Fodio.

ourselves what the teachings of Sufism in general and Mouridism, in particular, can bring?[2] (Mbacké 2011:2)

Their rhetorical question presupposes their belief that Murid moral and spiritual values, centred on the life and teaching of Shaykh Amadu Bamba, can contribute to a better, more peaceful world.

The Murid contribution is not primarily a theological rebuttal of Salafism or an apologetic but rather one of lived nonviolent practice, first by their founder and today wherever Murids live, be it in Senegal or the diaspora communities worldwide. Murids believe they have an antidote to violent interpretations of Islam. They offer the life and ethical teaching of Shaykh Amadu Bamba and themselves as his disciples, as examples of a lived Islam under his authority. Murids believe they have gifts to offer other Muslims and the world concerning peace and nonviolence. They attempt to share their faith and values with the broader world, even as they struggle to move from discourse to practice. If they speak to the world, they are often not heard or understood. I take Shaykh Abdoulaye Dièye as an example of someone who successfully pioneered ways to share Bamba's philosophy and teachings with non-Murids. Murids in New York share their spiritual and ethical values with outsiders following patterns first established by Shaykh Abdoulaye Dièye. In the broader context of my research question, 'How does the traditional Muridiyya value of nonviolence impact the way Murids live and interact with other communities in New York City?' this chapter reveals a variety of ways that Murids are engaged in peacemaking activities or in communicating their spiritual and ethical values of nonviolence in New York City.

[2] Les courants soufis, au-delà des principes de base de l'Islam, mettent l'accent sur les valeurs morales et spirituelles et le perfectionnement de l'âme charnelle. […] Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba Khadimou Rassoul a initié une voie sans précédent, dans le sillage de la tradition prophétique de Mouhamed (PSL). Dans le contexte actuel de mondialisation, de conflits et de crise, où chaque peuple est appelé à apporter sa contribution à l'édification d'un monde meilleur, un monde de paix, de stabilité et d'entente, sans renoncer à son identité, il s'avère important de s'interroger sur ce que les enseignements du soufisme en général et du Mouridisme en particulier peuvent y apporter (Mbacké 2011:2).

7.1.2 Abdoulaye Dièye's vision for sharing with outsiders

For most of its history, the Muridiyya, with a few minor exceptions, has been a Wolof-centric Sufi order. The followers Bamba gained from other ethnic groups were quickly Wolofized. The Murid movement contributed to Wolofization, an ongoing phenomenon in Senegal (Cruise O'Brien 1998; Villalón 1995:49). During his exile in Mauritania, a small number of Moors became his disciples (Babou 2007a:152) but primarily Bamba drew upon Wolof culture and ethics as part of his expression of Islam for the people of his time and place. Murids believe he had an expansive vision that his community would grow far beyond the Senegambia region, as revealed in prophecies about disciples across the sea. The first person to emphasise this aspect was Abdoulaye Dièye (1938-2002).

Dièye represents the first attempt by a Murid *shaykh* to translate and share the message of Bamba for people outside of Senegambia. Dièye pioneered strategies that would become a pattern for a variety of Murid attempts to share Bamba's teachings in the West. Babou (2011) gives a brief biography of Dièye as the favoured disciple of Sheikh S. Ahmad[3] who joined the Muridiyya during Bamba's exile in Mauritania. Dièye had a double education, both as a traditional *shaykh* and as a graduate of the French colonial schools. He was a *shaykh* with disciples, and he had a career as a civil servant. He mastered both French and Arabic. Beginning with his earliest teaching in St. Louis, Dièye eschewed Murid hagiography and Wolof; instead, he used French:

> [He] favored an engagement with Bamba's societal project and thought, comparing it to major ideologies such as Marxism, capitalism, and Maoism. He surrounded himself with young high school students, gave conferences in French in the schools, organized tea parties, and made frequent visits to families in the neighborhood of *Get Ndar* to talk about the Muridiyya. (Babou 2011:34)

These early initiatives contain some of the essential elements of what became his strategy. Dièye portrayed Bamba as a great Muslim thinker whose societal project, when well

[3] Was appointed Shaykh by Bamba himself and given the charge to start a school Khidmatoul Khadim, a name reportedly chosen by Bamba. Dièye became the head of this order upon the death of Shaykh Ahmad. He was unique as a Murid shaykh who is not a blood relative of Bamba, as such his authenticity as a Murid *shaykh* was and continues to be challenged by the Mbacké *shaykhs*.

understood rivalled that of Western philosophers. He presented the universal validity of Bamba's thought, his nationalist credentials and his resistance to both Arab acculturation and French colonization (Babou 2011:35). Dièye's scientific approach included research drawing on internal Murid sources (Bamba and his disciples' writings in Arabic and *Wolofal*), oral tradition, colonial archives, and visiting the places where Bamba lived in exile. He published journal articles and delivered speeches and was open to questions and challenges. He started a journal and various institutions.[4] He organized the first Murid culture week at the headquarters of UNESCO in Paris in 1979 (Babou 2011:38).

Dièye believed that the Muridiyya had a lot to teach to the Muslim community of Europe, especially on questions related to the universal message of Islam, religious tolerance, and racial equality (Babou 2011:39). He was the first Murid *shaykh* to make the conversion of foreigners a major dimension of his *da'wah*, considering the non-Muslim population of Europe a prime target (Babou 2011:43). Dièye's message was universalist, and he promoted it in the public sphere in Paris and Brussels. His conferences were opportunities for the use of exhibits, films and lectures to promote the universal message of the Muridiyya (Babou 2011:41). Dièye was an influential member of interfaith organizations in France.[5] Later, particularly during his ministry in the United States, Dièye would move his ecumenism beyond the realm of ideas to incorporate interfaith worship through church and synagogue visits, the sharing of food, and the singing of spiritual songs (Babou 2011:44).

According to his successor, Shaykh Aly Ndaw, Dièye sought to fulfil a prophecy made by Bamba:

> Fifty years after my death, my fame will cross the border of Senegal for the rest of the world. As for the Whites, I will address them at their home so that they testify to my rank as a slave of God and servant

[4] Movement Islamic des Murids en Europe (MIME), Khidmatul Khadim School Reunion Islands.
[5] l'Association des Gens du Livre (Association of the People of the Book), l'Association Islam Occident (the Association of Western Islam) and la Fraternité d'Abraham (Abrahamic Brotherhood). (Babou 2011:44)

> of the prophet (PSL). Without forgetting his sublime appeal in 'The Gifts of the Benefactor', O people of the land, O people of the sea, come to the ocean of generosity without trials. [6] (N'Daw n.d.:n.p.)

This verse calling the people of the land and sea, was Dièye's favourite, giving Bamba's message a universal appeal (Babou 2011:45). Wherever Dièye travelled, his message was attractive to people who 'saw in Amadu Bamba a champion of the black race and his teachings as interpreted by Dièye represented a form of pan-Africanist ideology rooted in Islam' (Babou 2011:42). His universalist message also attracted white Europeans and Americans interested in Western-styled Sufism. I spent three days at the *International Sufi School of Peace and Nonviolence* in Pout, Senegal, where Dièye's successor[7], Shaykh Aly N'daw, has established a *zawiya*. The members living at the *zawiya* when I visited were two white women from France, a white woman and daughter from Mauritius, another white woman from the Island of Reunion and a Pakistani man.[8]

Dièye pioneered Murid use of Western languages for teaching and sharing Bamba's message. He brought an intellectual approach to Bamba's thought and focused on presenting the universal validity of his message as he prioritized the conversion of foreigners. Dièye organised and influenced high school and university students using conferences to create a public discourse, share research, show films and exhibits. He started a Murid journal, *Ndigel*, and published journal articles and books. In Paris, he co-ordinated the first-ever Murid cultural week at UNESCO. He started schools (*daara* not *dahira*) that included non-Murids. He also participated in interfaith singing, prayers, and meetings with Jews, Christians and others. Dièye blazed a path that Murids in Harlem

[6] Cinquante ans après ma mort, ma renommée dépassera la frontière du Sénégal pour le reste du monde. Quant aux Blancs, je m'adresserai à eux chez eux afin qu'ils témoignent de mon rang d'esclave de Dieu et serviteur du prophète (PSL). Sans oublier son sublime appel dans <<Les Dons du Bienfaiteur>>, O gens des terres, O gens des mers, venez vers l'océan de générosité sans épreuves.

[7] Unlike all the other Murid shaykhs, leadership in this Murid sub-order does not follow blood lines, instead it is passed from master to disciple based on merit and revelation.

[8] Fieldwork in Pout, Senegal Aug 2018.

continue to follow as they *liggéeyal Serigne Touba*[9] (work for Amadu Bamba) in New York City.

7.2 Murids in New York follow Dièye's approach

Murid outreach in New York continues to exhibit many of the characteristics of Dièye's pioneering efforts. Although his disciples in New York are few, many admirers remain. Even those who do not consciously follow his methods find themselves putting them into practice out of necessity. Dièye understood what was needed to adapt and transmit the message of Bamba in the cultural and social context of the West. In this section, I describe some of the ways Murids attempt to share their love for and commitment to Bamba and his teachings with the non-Murid, and non-Muslim world of New York. First, I consider the *Ker Serigne Touba* house in Brooklyn, started by Mustafa Mbacké, that had a vision for outreach and utilized many of Dièye's methods but ultimately closed. Then, I analyse a variety of attempts to share with outsiders, ranging from the individual efforts of a coffee maker to the highly organised community effort put into the annual Bamba Days celebrations. I highlight the internal discourse of Murids as they reflect on their efforts to do the work of *Serigne Touba* in a secular, pluralistic world.

7.2.1 Dahira Nurul Daarayn, Brooklyn 1981-1988

In 1981, Mustafa Mbacké came to New York to study architecture. During this time, he rediscovered the writings of his great-grandfather Amadu Bamba (Ebin 1990:26) and with help from his prestigious family, started *dahira Nurul Daarayn* in a house in Brooklyn. The young intellectuals with Mustafa had some experience in Dièye-influenced movements at the university in Dakar, and some from Europe had participated

[9] *taalibes* generally refer to ritual work as *liggéeyeul Sëriñ Touba*, 'working for *Sëriñ Touba*'. (Venhorst 2013:275)

in MIME[10]. They had the vision to reach African Americans who joined the *dahira*, including a group of young African American women, who were part of the American Muslim Mission. These women liked 'the message of an African Islam founded by an African'[11] (Ebin 1990:28). Mbacké brought some of Dièye's universalist approach; he was open to conversation with American Muslims connected to the Nation of Islam. Using English was a part of the mission from the beginning and resulted in the translation of *Sindidi*[12] for use as a teaching and devotional tool. The conversion of foreigners[13] was a priority at the Keur Serigne Touba Brooklyn, and many African American Muslims joined the Muridiyya. Mustafa and other members of the *dahira Nourrou Darayni* published a Murid Newsletter which he and others from Keur Serigne Touba Brooklyn handed out on the campus of Columbia University (Ebin 1990; MCM14 2018).

The rapid growth in the number of Murids in Harlem soon exposed conflicting desires in the community between a Dièye-influenced approach and a more traditional Wolof and Touba-oriented approach. The majority settled in Harlem and coalesced around what led eventually to the creation of MICA and ultimately the closure of Keur Serigne Touba in Brooklyn in 1988[14] (Ebin 1990). The communal turn towards a stronger Wolof/Senegalese orientation and away from a mission to Americans may be why few of the African Americans who were part of *Nurul Daarayn* are active in the Muridiyya

[10] *Mouvement International des Murid en Europe* (Ebin 1990:27), successor to an earlier movement started by Dièye (Babou 2011:40).
[11] le message de l'islam africain fondé par un leader africain.
[12] Poem by Bamba, a prayer for protection and success citing many prophets shared by Muslims and Christians, whose names appear in both the Qur'an and the Bible.
[13] Whereas the Muridiyya is still largely the affair of Senegalese, the Tijaniyya, and the ''Community of the Divine Flood'' in particular, has attracted a sizeable number of Western converts to Islam and Sufism. Ibrahim Niasse's grandson Hassan Cisse´ (d. 2008 CE) was particularly successful in building a following among African Americans in major US cities. However, converts also came from other racial and ethnic backgrounds in North America and Europe, and Niasse's movement also spread in such diverse countries as Trinidad, Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia, and South Africa, transforming it into a truly cosmopolitan Sufi community (Seesemann 2010:612).
[14] Email correspondence with Djiby Diagne, 5 June 2020.

today. Despite this, a doctor originally from Jamaica, who grew up in Brooklyn and was part of the *Ker Serigne Touba* house there, told me:

> The genesis of many things that are seen today in the Murid community: the parade, UN conf, MICA magazine, positive relations with non-Muslim community, efforts to educate African Americans in a "peace Islam," sending children to Touba for education that included behaviour, identity and Qur'anic studies.[15] (MCM26 2019)

The activities and impulses of the first Keur Serigne Touba house bear the influence of Abdoulaye Dièye, apparently transmitted through his disciples influenced in both the European Murid diaspora and university students influenced by him and his teachings in Senegal.

7.2.2 Interfaith attempts by Murids in New York

Dièye actively sought out interfaith meetings, singing and praying with other faith communities. Although less common, there are examples of interfaith encounters during Serigne Mourtada's visits in Atlanta and Washington D.C. In Harlem, through the relational connections of Belozi Harvey, Serigne Mourtada and his entourage visited White Rock Baptist Church (152nd W 127th N) then pastored by Charles Kenyatta.[16] Mustafa Mbacké recounted that 'he invited us to his church where we chanted the poem written by Cheikh Amadu Bamba, dedicated to the mother of Jesus. And that is *Fousti*' (MCM14 2018).

The present Ker Serigne Touba house on Edgecombe and 137th street is caddy-corner from the Mount Calvary/St Marks United Methodist Church. MICA leaders and Pastor John Carrington became friends. MICA was frequently renting the church basement for large gatherings. They invited Pastor Carrington to the 2016 meeting of community leaders and dignitaries with Shaykh Mame Mor Mbacké, where he expressed his appreciation of the good relations:

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[15] Forty children were sent to Touba, including two of his sons.
[16] Former associate of Malcolm X who converted to Islam for a period then converted back to Christianity and pastored this church.

> I'm delighted to be here … As I look out of the church, which is right across from your community centre, I see your people coming and going. I admire the days they gather there for prayer. I've had the opportunity to get to know some of your people who have come over to help me understand your faith better than I do now. I'm also happy that we are able to share our building with you. … it means so much to us just to have this opportunity to get to know our neighbours in this way. … Thank you so much for the opportunity to break bread with you. (Mbaye 2016)

Inviting Pastor Carrington to meet with the Shaykh illustrates the small ways MICA seeks positive relations with Christian neighbours, particularly those willing to rent their building to a Muslim group. Small gestures help to make interfaith relations flow smoothly for Murids in New York. While these formal engagements benefit public relations in Harlem, there are other more organic ecumenical connections.

NST celebrated *Goudi Mame Cheikh Ibrahima Fall*[17] at the Living Seed Yoga and Holistic Health Center[18] where a Murid teaches 'Traditional West African Djembe and Djun Djun'.[19] The NST Facebook page[20] displays a picture of Murids singing and white Americans dancing around them in a circle. I interviewed the Murid drummer at the 2019 Bamba Day Parade:

> I organized the Sufi get together because I lived in the community and I'm a Sufi, and I'm from another country. I teach African drums and music and practice Sufi singing, drumming and bringing peace and joy … It's all about bringing the 'good' thing to the United States to my contribution to know everywhere you go you have to bring your contribution to the country. Work hard, teach children, talk nice, respect, give love and peace and to show that. You have to be with people and show it to them and everybody can see it's not only talking; he's doing and singing and you know, knowing about Sufi, it's about bringing peace and work together and sing; to know about other cultures and another side you never met before you never see before. So, [that] you don't have to be afraid. (MCM20 2019)

This drummer connects 'bringing peace' with the ethical behaviour taught by Bamba: hard work, teaching children, proper behaviour, and respect. He sees connecting African Sufis with Americans, through music, as part of 'bringing a good thing to the United States'. His contribution to America is to share Bamba's peace (as expressed by the ethical Sufi values he shares through music) and through encounter (an evening of music

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[17] A nighttime celebration in memory of Shaykh Ibrahima Fall, the founding saint of the Baay Faal.
[18] New Platz, NY (https://www.thelivingseed.com/)
[19] https://www.thelivingseed.com/dance-drum-classes. The *djun djun* (or *djudjung* in Wolof) is a barrel shaped drum common in W. African ensembles. For example see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dcNbJRIRBao
[20]https://www.facebook.com/NDAWISERIGNETOUBA/photos/a.985925828216516/985925941549838/?type=3&theater

and dance shared by African Sufis and American yoga centre participants) to take away the fear of other cultures which some Americans experience. On a much larger scale, the annual celebration of Bamba Days is also an attempt to make Bamba's ethics known, and to seek connection with outsiders.

7.2.3 Cultural Weeks Shaykh Amadu Bamba

Modelled after the Cultural Week organized by Dièye at UNESCO in Paris, Cultural Weeks Shaykh Amadu Bamba are celebrated each year in the latter part of July and the beginning of August. July 28th was appointed 'Chiekh Ahmadou Bamba Day' in 1988 by then Manhattan borough president David Dinkins (Abdullah 2010:107). The most significant public events during Cultural Weeks all happen on this day. First, there is a parade down Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard that culminates in Africa Square where there are speeches by religious and political notables from Senegal, the New York diaspora and city officials. In the afternoon there is a large communal meal and at night a conference at the United Nations building. Central to all the events planned during these two weeks is the presence of the *shaykh* from Touba appointed to serve diaspora communities worldwide. Originally this was Shaykh Mouhamadou Mourtada Mbacké. Since his death, his son, Shaykh Mame Mor Mbacké, has carried this responsibility.

Besides the parade and conference at the UN, during Cultural Weeks other events allow Murids maximum opportunity to meet and receive blessings from the Shaykh. *Dahiras* in Cincinnati, Atlanta, D.C. Detroit and Montreal organise *ziars* for the Shaykh. Each year MICA invites Harlem officials (city government, fire, police, hospital, community block associations) to join Murid leaders, the Shaykh and his entourage for a meal hosted in a Murid-owned restaurant. The 2019 Cultural Weeks programme lists the meeting as *New York Ziar/Meeting Serigne Maam Moor with American and foreign dignitaries at Jacob Rest. 2695 Frederick Douglass Blvd. New York.* The MICA president invited me to attend. At that event, following introductions, each person was invited to

share five minutes or so about themselves and their work. When everyone had shared Shaykh Mame Mor Mbacké also spoke, and the evening ended with all extending their hands for a blessing as he prayed. The event was captured by a Bichri TV[21] crew.

The activities of Cultural Weeks Shaykh Amadu Bamba are oriented towards strengthening the Murid community and renewing their relationship with Touba via the Shaykh. However, they also have an awareness of being a Sufi Muslim community in a sometimes hostile American context. Through the public and private events of Bamba Days, they seek to show New Yorkers that they are peaceful Muslims who appreciate America (for example carrying American flags in the parade) and their desire to share the benefits of being a disciple of Shaykh Amadu Bamba. They share their values with the world to differentiate themselves from negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims as terrorists, highlighting this in the parade and the UN conference.

Bamba Day Parade

The performance of a parade makes the statement, 'We have something good, something we are proud of, and we're celebrating, we want everyone to know!' Every year since 1988, Murids in New York have organized a parade to celebrate July 28th as Bamba Day. Abdullah (2010) describes the 2003 edition of the parade, with memories of the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center still fresh in people's minds. He captures well the imagery, drama, scale and message of the event. Abdullah connects the creation of Bamba Day and the parade to the leadership of Balozi Muhammad, (aka Robert A Harvey d. 2016), MICA's first president (Ebin 1993:30). He also analyses the incomplete integration of African Muslim immigrants into the African American community of Harlem. Abdullah explains the messages written on signs and enacted with bodies in the street, are meant to tell onlookers that they are peaceful Muslims. Historian Cheikh Anta

[21] https://bichri.tv/

Babou says that Murids are 'performing peace'.[22] Before looking at what Murids say about the parade, I want to bring Abdullah's interpretation of the parade into conversation with other authors, Werbner (1996) see Sufi processions through the lens of sacralizing space, Singh (2015) who connects Sufi processions in India to peacemaking and Bercerra's (2014) description of the Mexican Day parade in New York written from a more political perspective.

Sufi processions, writes Werbner (1996), 'are a religious act in which the name of Allah is ritually inscribed in the public spaces Muslims march along. Through the chanting of the *zikr* British Pakistanis Islamicize urban places' (331). She understands the procession as an act of witness to other Muslims (332) and emphasizes that the composition of the marchers matters, that while wealthy and powerful people build and control mosques, the procession is open to anyone. 'Many of those who march are members of the Muslim underprivileged or working class. It is they who assert, by marching, their pride in Islam, their self-confidence and their power' (333). She also sees the procession she analysed as immigrants expressing the 'rights of minorities to celebrate their culture and religion in the public domain within a multi-cultural, multifaith, multiracial society' (333).

Afro-Indian Sufi religious processions, in Hyderabad, venerating the founder of the Indian Chishtiyya[23] order include marchers, drummers, dancers, and banners. The central banner is the *chador*, which represents the presence of Khwaja, the founder/saint. The crowds who witnessed the procession are of mixed faiths, but the marchers are Muslim. Singh (2015) writes that despite the martial imagery, the procession is 'an idiom for harmony … an invitation to participate, to reconcile before the appearance of the Khwaja, symbolised by his *chador* … an invitation to all—insiders or outsiders—to join in to

[22] Personal conversation with Cheikh Anta Babou (4 April 2019).
[23] See Ernst, Carl W 2002 Sufi Martyrs of Love: The Chishti order in South Asia and beyond New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

"meet the Khwaja"' (100). *Qawwali* (devotional singers) sing praise to Khwaja. Singh points out that for these Afro-Indians, 'living in a time of rapid social change … public performance of devotion' (111) is about their determination to maintain integration internally and 'more widely with other Muslims, Hindus, and Catholics who form a significant part of the local landscape' (111).

Writing about the Mexican Day Parade on Madison Ave in New York, Bercerra (2014) sees the parade through the political lens of power relations and undocumented persons seeking inclusion and recognition. 'Marching down the streets … is a political act … the act of speaking in public—the public uttering of one's beliefs' (335). She says, 'public events can be a means of (re)creating a sense of community and gaining public recognition … parades are a means of the desire for political recognition' (342). A significant element of the parade are the representations of *lo Mexicano* as the '"good," "traditional," "colourful," "familial" Mexican' (352). Bercerra concludes, 'every time Mexicans parade down Madison Avenue they are enacting belonging and reclaiming inclusion' (353).

Abdullah, Werbner, Singh and Bercerra are all describing and analysing immigrant communities celebrating public parades or processions that highlight particularity, being Murid devotees of Bamba, British Pakistanis Sufis, Chishti devotees of Khwaja or Mexicans. Both New York parades have an emphasis on being the 'good' elements of their kind, i.e. peaceful Muslims not terrorists and good, familial Mexicans not 'low-rider' Mexicans. Kane (2001) says Murids in New York have benefited from the image of being 'good Muslims' and 'good blacks'. The public devotion to Bamba or Khwaja attempts to invite outsiders 'in'. Singh observation 'invitation to all—insiders or outsiders—to join in' a sentiment that resonates with Abdullah's description of the Bamba Day parade. For the many Mexicans and Murids in New York with irregular immigration status, the parade provides a sanctioned event to seek recognition and to speak in public. Singh identifies

that these communities live in times of rapid change and that public performance, the parade/procession is about seeking integration with other Muslim communities and with other faith communities. Werbner's perspective is different, she sees the public procession as 'an act of *tabliq* (making Islam known), of publicly saying to other Muslims: Regard us; we are proud of being Muslims; we are willing to parade our Muslimness openly in the streets' (332). Werbner and Singh emphasize different aspects of boundary marking, Werbner highlighting difference, i.e., 'Muslimness', and Singh focusing on invitation and integration.

In 2002 there was an internal debate about whether to go ahead with the annual Bamba Day parade. A member of the MICA board at that time and responsible for getting the parade permit from the city told me:

> [Balozi Muhammad] told us to go ahead [with the parade] but to keep our eyes open. If people are cursing you or trying to attack you, you know how to respond. You are Sufis who forgive, and you know proper behaviour. (MICA4 2019)

He continued:

> Americans were naturally angry and upset. Most Americans could not distinguish between the various types of Muslims, and all they could see was that it was Muslims who took down the World Trade Center and so, any Muslims they regarded through those eyes. Some Murids said, 'We should not do the parade.' But Serigne Mourtada condemned them. If we are hiding, it is as if we are not in the truth. More people than before joined in this event, including people from the community to show solidarity. (MICA4 2019)

The African American Murid leader, Belozi Harvey, encouraged the community to stage the 2002 parade despite perceived dangers with the assurance that as Sufis they know what to do if threatened or attacked. The Murid leader from Senegal condemned the fearful. My informant concluded that not to do the parade would have been 'hiding', and that hiding meant 'not being in the truth'. They held the parade without incident, and some non-Murids from the community joined in to show solidarity. The fact that they had some non-Murids join in the parade confirms and adds to the data from Singh's description of the Afro-Indian Sufis religious procession in India and his interpretation that one of the purposes is an open invitation to reconciliation. The marchers perform

peace, simultaneously bringing together insiders and outsiders while concealing internal divisions and fears. The parade can therefore be understood as an act of peacemaking.

Performing peace as a community is a particularly important theme of my thesis: Murids do want to share their values and ethics with the world. The act of putting on a parade is an act of peacemaking because it is a bid to be part of the city, to be visible rather than hidden; to be revealed rather than secret. People fear what is hidden or secret. The idea of the parade as peacemaking is not how Murids talk about the parade. They speak about the parade as a witness and of doing 'work of Serigne Touba'.

Imam Khadim Bousso, speaking to a reporter from Bichri TV on the arrival in New York of Shaykh Mame Mor Mbacké for the 30th edition of the Bamba Day Parade, shared his understanding of what the parade means:

> Marching, walking and calling on the name of God has a long tradition in Islam. If you remember Seydina Umar, when he converted to Islam--he walked and called out 'There is no god but God and Muhammad is his Prophet.' What the march symbolises most importantly is what Serigne Touba said, that the *nasaran* would know his name. Walking and announcing, 'God is one, Muhammed is his prophet' and people hearing you is a form of *xutba* (sermon). Standing in front of people and speaking is a witness to them. What the disciples do, standing in the centre of the streets of Harlem, in the middle of New York, declaring 'God is one.' The most important symbolism is that since 9/11 if you work on an aeroplane and you sneeze and say *alhamdulillah* or *Allahu akbar* they will stop the aeroplane, and everyone will get off because that word is a form of fighting for them. If we take those words and go through the street saying *la ilah* with the police escorting us, this is a very very big deal! it symbolises that from the beginning Islam was about peace. We greet people with *asalam alekum, yal na la Yalla may jamm, yal na yalla musal suma waay*[24] that's what Serigne Touba taught us, to give peace and to forgive; that is what the disciples here are doing. Why do they let us march through the streets saying *la ilah muhammadu rassoulaay* and provide police escort? It is because of the discipline and good behaviour of the disciples, that is why they are given this … What is happening is that when Serigne Touba calls, many respond. What this shows is that we are in the right path.[25] (Batch 2018)

For Imam Bousso, the parade is a public witness to the unicity of God, what Werbner identifies as 'an act of *tabliq'* (332). The message of the parade is for the *nasaran* (Christians or white people), a sermon delivered by the chanting marchers, a symbolic witness about Islam. Where the simple fact of speaking in Arabic can provoke discrimination, the marchers declare, 'Peace to you. May God give you peace, may God protect you, my friend', and proclaim a message from the teaching of Bamba about peace

[24] Peace to you. May God give you peace, may God protect you my friend.
[25] My English transcription of a TV interview in Wolof.

and forgiveness. For Bousso, the police escort is testimony that the city government recognizes the excellent behaviour and good reputation of Murids. He takes this to mean that those following Serigne Touba are on the right path or in the words of the MICA board member in charge of getting the parade permit, 'in the truth.'

The parade, like many forms of cultural performance, can mean different things to different people. It is unclear if observers understand the witness that Imam Bousso eloquently describes. I walked and watched four Bamba Day parades between 2016 and 2019, interacting with watchers (Americans, tourists, other Senegalese, police, storekeepers) drawn to the spectacle of Africans marching in beautiful clothing. Like the Afro-Indian parade accompanied by Qawwali singers, the sound signature of the Bamba Day parade is the singing of the *xassaid* and the Baay Faal drummers. I witnessed the parade's attractive power as bystanders sometimes joined in momentary spontaneous dance steps with the drummers. I took pictures of a Baay Faal man on his knees outside of a chic coffee shop, *The Monkey Face Café*, begging for money for the construction of the *Ker Serigne Touba* house. The laughing manager placed a $20 bill in the wooden bowl to the delight of onlookers—the parade creating moments of participation and belonging in totally unexpected ways.

In the 2018 Bamba Day parade, the messages on the banners and placards carried by marchers can be read. Some are incomprehensible to onlookers, e.g. '*Dahira* Mame Diarra Bousso' (Grandma Diarra Bousso circle group) containing two Wolof words and a name. Others are easier to understand: 'Murid Islamic Community in America', 'Islam condemns racism and tribalism', or 'Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba is an African Muslim Leader of Nonviolence'. The word 'Murid' or the name 'Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba' may be unknown, but the message is clear, this is an Islamic community in New York that condemns racism and tribalism. Most importantly, they transmit the message that they are nonviolent Muslims. Despite Imam Bousso's understanding that this parade is an

invitation to Islam, the message most comprehensible to onlookers is that these marchers are Muslims, part of America who claim to be nonviolent and anti-racist. The parade invites the onlookers to consider a nonviolent Muslim community living in their midst and is thus an act of peacemaking. The parade terminates in Africa Square, the plaza in front of the New York State Office building.

Marchers spill into the plaza and fill the chairs, carefully segregating men and women in different sections. The blazing mid-day July sun causes hundreds of people to use the *Cultural Weeks Shaykh Ahmadou Bamba* magazine they found on their chairs as a hat or umbrella. On stage, MICA leaders, dignitaries and guests from Senegal, and New York City officials give speeches, thanking one another and congratulating the Murid diaspora for their contributions to Harlem and New York more generally. On the perimeter, Senegalese street vendors sell pins, t-shirts, and umbrellas while Islamic booksellers offer up everything from Qur'ans to the printed prayers of Amadu Bamba. *Coffee Touba Jeefjeel* offers free samples enticing bystanders to buy a bag of flavoured coffee. Posters from the travelling exhibition on Bamba are on display. Twice I encountered a Christian evangelist walking, praying out loud and sometimes talking to persons on the edges, testimony that the public sphere is a contested religious space, with Muslims, Christians, and vendors all making claims on the participants.

From Africa Square, the crowd moves to a more private location a few blocks away, to eat lunch under tents set up in a school playground. The majority of the participants hang out talking until the food is served and then begin to make their way home. However, for others, there remains one more important activity to complete the day.

The annual conference at the United Nations

Each year the as part of Cultural Weeks MICA organizes an academic conference held in the United Nations General Assembly Hall. The location is strategic. Article 1 of the UN

charter states, 'The Purposes of the United Nations are: To maintain international peace and security … To develop friendly relations among nations' (United Nations 2015). From the beginning, Murids used the location to symbolically communicate that they were aligned with these values. It is no surprise that the theme for 2002 was 'Peace and Nonviolence in Islam'. The themes chosen between 2002[26] and 2019 reveal what Murids hope to share with the world: the teachings and ethics of Bamba, including. peace and nonviolence, commitment to education, and his philosophy of work.

Since the tragic events of 9/11, Murids have often used this conference to showcase their commitments to the teaching/example of Bamba regarding peace, nonviolence and forgiveness. Some years these themes feature explicitly, as in 2015, 'Pacifist *jihad* and the economic doctrine of a great 19th century African Sufi' and in 2016, 'The role of African countries in the fight against terrorism'. Even those conferences where the primary theme was on other subjects, for example, 2018, 'The place and role of education in the Muridiyya', the major academic paper[27] presented by Mourtala Mboup posed the question, 'Is the Shaykh's doctrinal pacifism reconcilable with active military duty?' (Mboup 2019). At the 2019 UN conference, Shaykh Mame Mor Mbacké addressed the injustice of Muslim nations not doing their part to care for refugees[28], an issue fundamentally related to social justice and peacemaking[29] (Stassen 2008).

The annual Bamba Day parade is the most visible and public Murid attempt to show themselves as a nonviolent Muslim American community. The parade is an act of peacemaking and reconciliation, inviting bystanders into relationship, however momentary. The parade is paired with an academic conference strategically located at the

[26] No data on themes prior to 2002.
[27] 'The Muridiyya's Contribution to WWI: When Sufi humanism transcends political and military contingencies'.
[28] Field note 28 July 2019.
[29] A concern for justice is one of the factors used to classify types of pacifism in the theoretical framework I developed in Chapter Three.

UN and offering a platform for Murid scholars to share their papers. Taken together the activities of Bamba Day play a major role in the way Murids living in post 9/11 New York 'perform peace', communicating that they are a community with resources to contribute to building a peaceful society. There are other public ways that Murids share their message with the world, for example, the conference and an exhibition described in the next section which follows closely the example set by Shaykh Abdoulaye Dièye.

7.2.4 A travelling exhibition 'Amadu Bamba: A Muslim Peacemaker'

The organizers of the *Islam and World Peace: Perspectives from African Muslim Nonviolence Traditions* exhibition hosted at Columbia University brought together nearly thirty academics and specialists to present papers and discuss nonviolent Muslim traditions. They identify:

> The need to understand and learn from the legacies and teachings of nonviolent Muslim leaders is urgent today, more than ever before. Thus, this conference invites students of religion and Islam around the world to engage in substantive ways the genesis, diffusion, and teachings of Islamic nonviolence traditions of Sufi leaders and their interpretation and operationalization of the concept of *Jihad* that unequivocally rejects extremism and intolerance in all their forms. (Diouf & Diagne 2015)

Most presenters were of Senegalese background, many of them Murids. This conference was sparked by a transnational partnership between Soulayeman Bachir Daigne and Mamadou Diouf at Columbia University, Shaykh Abdoul Aziz Mbacké in Senegal who has close ties to Harlem and Djiby Diagne, a lay leader in the diaspora. This conference and exhibition were modelled on the example of Abdoulaye Dièye. Like Dièye, the organizers wanted to communicate African Islamic values to the West. Drawing upon the communications expertise of Shaykh Abdoul Aziz Mbacké, founder of Majalis,[30] the first Murid online presence, and member of the New York diaspora with English translation and editing skills, the partners created an exhibition of 53 large format (150cm x 50cm) posters.[31] All but one of the posters carry the title, 'Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba: A Muslim

[30] http://www.majalis.org
[31] See example in the Appendix.

Peacemaker'. The one exception reads: 'Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba: A Muslim Leader of Nonviolence'. The posters tell Bamba's biography, the emergence of the Muridiyya, his resistance to the French, his exile, his Sufi teaching and his example of forgiveness. I interviewed Mbacké at his home in Touba:

> Why an exhibition? ... Murids are making efforts to promote their values and their culture. Like the other communities do, which is normal. But, for me, the way we do it, sometimes it is not very suitable for the environment in which we are … Some speak of proselytisation and all, but I think the community has the right to share its positive values. So, but the way it is done, for me, it is, I'm making a criticism, to me it is Murid centric. In general, and it is true that we speak more to ourselves than to others. Besides, when we discuss our moral and ethical values in our *dahiras*, we speak Wolof. It's always from us to us. [32] (SEN3 2018)

Mbacké's criticism is directed at something I also observed throughout my fieldwork. Murids in New York sometimes seem to be in an echo chamber, speaking only Wolof and speaking to each other rather than the world. He described his desire to break out of this mould:

> I said to myself that we need tools adapted to the context in which we find ourselves, [in order] to be understood. Because … when we talk about the West in general, I'm simplifying, above all its materialistic values, material things, money, in any case, secular values in which we do not find God. In general, and … the consequence is that we receive [from the West] more than we give. [33] (SEN3 2018)

He laments the fact that Murids accept the message of materialism and atheism prevalent in the West rather than contributing their spiritual and ethical values to the West:

> We, and our children, are all connected. We all have Facebook accounts; we have WhatsApp and all that. And we see that we receive more than we give. Okay, so, I told myself that we had to adapt our tools to make ourselves heard … So, I thought of the exhibition at the moment when I understood the given situation at that time. We worked hard to do it. We made 53 banners, 53 banners in large format, in which we tried to summarise the life and the teachings of Cheikh Amadu Bamba. It was also a little

[32] Pourquoi une exhibition ? Murids font des efforts pour promouvoir leurs valeurs et leur culture. Comme le font les autres communautés, ce qui est très normal. Mais, pour moi la manière dont on le fait, quelque fois n'est pas très adaptée aux milieux dans lequel ou on est. … Certains parlent de prosélytisation et tous, mais moi je pense la communauté a le droit de partager ses valeurs positives. Donc, mais la manière dont il le faut le faire, pour moi, c'est une critique que je fais, il est mourido-centre pour moi, en général, et c'est vrai, qu'on s'est parlent plus à nous qu'aux autres. D'ailleurs, quand on va dispute nos moralités, nos *dahiras*, on parle le Wolof. C'est toujours de nous, à nous.

[33] Donc, moi je me dit qu'il faut des utiles adapter au contexte dans lequel ou on est pour nous faire entendre, parce qu'a même […] quand on parler d'occident en général, je schématise, surtouts les valeurs matérialistes, voilà la matière, l'argent, en tous cas les valeurs séculariser dans les quel on ne trouve pas Dieu. En général, et ça... la conséquence est que nous nous recevons plus que nous donnons

> pirouette, because we, in general, we Murids, we are focused on biography, geography, miracles, etc. but not so much on the lessons that we can share with the whole world.[34] (SEN3 2018)

In the exhibition, he sought to change the way Murids communicate about their *shaykh*, to shift the focus from hagiography to 'lessons that we can share with the whole world'. Like Abdoulaye Dièye before him, his desire is to emphasise the spiritual and ethical teaching of Bamba instead of the miracles and history. Murids, who wish to share their values with the world, often do so by following the example of Dièye. He continued:

> So, we did the exhibition in English with images. We summarised it so that it would be understandable to non-Murids. In the exhibit, we find striking images, which, in my opinion, deserve to be better shared. For example, the first banner says, it is from *Masalik-ul-Jinan* (Ways unto Heaven), 'Some Muslims have been abused by their pretend *jihad*. Because in the name of *jihad,* they attack innocent human beings. They claim to raise the voice of God when, in reality, they raise only their notoriety. They seek only their objectives, politics, money.' Another verse, for example, in which he says, 'Lord protect me from harming the whites, nor the blacks, nor the Muslims, nor an unbeliever.' … messages like, 'I forgive all my enemies, in front of God.' So, this kind of message, for me, deserves to be shared for everyone in the West through the mass media. At CNN, you have a 99% chance of seeing bearded Muslim men with Kalashnikovs, etc. to see a Muslim who says, 'I don't want to harm anyone.' The possibility, for example, for non-Muslims to see that--that shocks 'the mind'. [35] (SEN3 2018)

Mbacké seeks to counter the prevailing negative image of Muslims that dominates mass media reporting and offers the example of a living Muslim community, the disciples of a peacemaker, who reject violent understandings of *jihad* and promote forgiveness. In addition to the Columbia University conference, they have twice displayed this exhibition

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[34] Nous, nos enfants sont tous connecter, on a tous des comptes Facebook, on a WhatsApp, on et tout ça. Et on voir que nous recevons plus que nous donnons. Bon, donc, je me suis dit qu'il fallait donc qu'on ait des utiles adapter pour nous faire entendre. Donc, d'une exhibition c'est vraiment un utile en général en occident là où on faire des... quand on veut communiquer, on utiliser ces utiles-là. Donc, j'ai pensé à l'exposition du moment où j'étais dedans donc j'avais les donnes, etc... À ce moment, bien que on a travaillé dure pour le faire on a eu 53 bannières. 53 bannières... grand format... Dans lesquels on a essayé de résumer la vie et les enseignements de Cheikh Amadu Bamba. Là aussi c'était une petite pirouette, parce que nous en général, nous les Murids, on s'est concentre sur la biographie, la géographie, les miracles, etc.… mais pas tellement sur les enseignements qu'on peut partager avec tout le monde.

[35] Donc, on a fait l'expo en anglais, donc en anglaise avec des images avec... on a résumé vraiment pour que ce soit compréhensibles a des non-Murids. Donc, dans lequel on trouve vraiment des médias assez frappants, qui vraiment à mon avis mériterais d'être mieux partager. Par exemple, le premier bananier dit, c'est tirer du *Masaliku Jinan*, « certains musulmans ont était abuses par leur prétendre jihad. Parce qu'au nom du jihad ils s'attaquent à des êtres humains innocent. Qui s'avait prétendent élever la voix de Dieu alors qu'ils ne le font qu'élever leur propre notoriété. Il ne rechercher que leur, voilà des objectives, politique, argent » … une autre verset par exemple dans lequel il dit, « Seigneur protège moi de ne pas ennuyer ni a un blancs, ni à un noire, ni à un musulmane, ni à un incroyant » … donc, il-y-a des messages comme ça, 'j'ai pardonner a tous mes ennemies, en face de Dieu' Donc, ce genre de message, pour moi, qu'a même, mériterait d'être partagé sur tous au niveau au <<occident>> ou les mass media, à CNN tu a 99% de chance de voir des musulmanes barbu avec des Kalachnikovs etc.. Que de voir un musulman qui dit, moi je ne veux ennuyer a personne. Et ça, le fait que par exemple, d'autre non-musulmanes de voir que ça, ça, ça choc « the mind ».

at Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri. In New York, Murid event organizers showed selections of these posters at most of the events I attended during my fieldwork (Bamba Days, Ramadan, *magal*, *ziars* and *dahira* meetings).

The exhibition represents one carefully planned example of Murid intellectuals and academics seeking to communicate Murid values with the world instead of receiving the world's values. Other members of the New York diaspora pursue more experiential, even spontaneous, means of sharing their commitments to the nonviolent witness of their Shaykh.

7.2.5 Café Touba and the peace fighter

Dièye organized tea parties (Babou 2011:34) to connect with high school students in St. Louis, Senegal. One Baay Faal coffee-maker in Brooklyn uses coffee in his quest to spread Bamba's message of peace. He started roasting coffee in his back yard, following a recipe attributed to Shaykh Amadu Bamba that he learned at home in Senegal. His brand, *Coffee Touba Jeefjeel*, hit some supermarket shelves in New York in 2019 and earlier online. The first time I met him, he introduced himself to me as a 'peace fighter'. More than a year later, I interviewed him to find out what he meant by the label. He said:

> Peace fighter means everything. Yeah, because in peace, that's where you can find everything in there. So, why don't we fight for it? … And as I said, we are Muslim and Islam means peace. Mmm. I'm still on the peace … my guide spiritually, which is Serigne Touba. Shaykh Amadu Bamba and Mame Shaykh Ibra Faal they the most peace fighters ever I can see in my life. Like, if we talk about what he came through, what he did, and all, you can see only peace there was no oppression. Like the first thing I can say, Serigne Touba, what they did to him and he couldn't respond back … those people knew he had more power than them and he didn't do anything. That's a peace fighter. (MCM17 2019)

He primarily calls Bamba a peace fighter because he did not 'respond back' to the mistreatment and oppression of the French. For him, Islam is peace and that peace was manifest in Bamba who did not respond violently or in kind to the mistreatment and oppression he experienced. Thus, showing the oppressor that he had 'more power', albeit power of a different kind. This entrepreneur often takes a thermos of his Café Touba to

the streets, where he gives people a sample of his fresh-brewed blend, part of his advertising. When they taste his coffee, he says, they taste peace. He told me:

> I call it 'coffee of peace', of course, but the first thing is the taste. The taste makes you feel peace in and out and the second thing is you want to ask about is, 'Where this coming from?' It's coming from the first peace fighter [then] you're going to start a conversation, talk about peace again, and you're going to start extend[ing] peace, and when you leave, you leave in peace and learn something from peace, so you'll always stay in peace. So, it's all about peace, the stuff that brings it, that gives you, you give it and you receive it and you live in it. It's all about peace. (MCM17 2019)

His act of sharing coffee, believing it is part of his calling as a disciple of Bamba, and part of creating peace, is Murid peacemaking on a micro-level. One coffee maker on the street hustling, advertising his product and hosting conversations about peace, about Bamba. This creative entrepreneur has integrated his faith and his business. His unique blending of the Murid spiritual and ethical practice of peace and nonviolence is part of branding his coffee. Peace becomes discernible by the sense of smell and taste (Stoller & Olkes 2007). His formula is to, share Café Touba with people who, when they 'taste peace' will wonder, 'From where does this peace come?' Thus, he opens the door to talk about peace and the 'peace fighter'. For him, this is a way to 'extend peace', to 'experience peace', to 'learn' from peace and to 'stay in peace'. Perhaps eccentric and esoteric, he articulates a lived practice of peacemaking that goes beyond personal ethics, one that enters into the world, actively sharing and promoting peace.

7.2.6 Writing and publishing in English

There is a growing body of literature published in English by Murid intellectuals and academics. They follow the example of Dièye who published journal articles, pamphlets and books in French and English as well as starting the journal *Ndigel*. His successor, Shaykh Aly N'daw and disciples at The International Sufi School of Peace and Service, continue the tradition, publishing collections of Dièye and N'Daw's teaching in French and English. Murid academics in American Universities continue to pursue this approach that Dièye pioneered. Most prolific is the historian Cheikh Anta Babou who has written many journal articles on subjects ranging from hair braiding parlours in Harlem (Babou

2013) to the biography of Dièye (Babou 2011) or Bamba's pedagogy (Babou 2003). He also authored the authoritative history of Bamba (Babou 2007a). Next is Fallou Ngom who published both books and journal articles on *Ajami* literature (Ngom & Zito 2012; Ngom & Zito 2013; Ngom 2016). Sana Camara (2017) has complied a collection of Bamba's poems, translated into English. Although not in academia, MICA president Pape Sette Dramé (2015) published a history of the *Association des Senegalais d'Amerique* in English.

MICA publishes an annual magazine, *Cultural Weeks Shaykh Ahmadou Bamba* featuring reports from the MICA president and other MICA commissions as well as book reviews, book excerpts, and homages to Murid *shaykhs* past and present. Advertising from Murid businesses in Harlem and Senegal funds the publication. The editor and writers are part of the New York diaspora. The magazine regularly publishes proceedings from the annual MICA conference at the UN, for example, Souleymane Bachir Diagne's 2017 paper, *Philosophy of Nonviolence based on the teachings of Amadu Bamba*. Since 2009, the MICA magazine has been entirely in English whereas older editions had articles in both French and English.

7.2.7 Conversion of foreigners

Shaykh Abdoulaye Dièye prioritized the conversion of foreigners. The original migrants to New York teamed up with African American Muslims, many of whom joined the Muridiyya. Subsequently, Murids became primarily concerned with establishing their community and the conversion of foreigners became less of a priority. During my fieldwork, in 2017-2019 I rarely encountered African Americans at Murid community activities except for two women converts or occasionally the African American spouse of a Murid. My observation is significantly different from the earlier research done by Zain Abdullah who reported that 'one hundred African Americans [attended] the English session' (Abdullah 2010:126) of the 2003 MICA conference at the UN.

During my fieldwork, I heard a lot of talk among Murids who said they were working for Bamba to reach non-Murids, but for most, it appears not to translate into practice. Yet, some conversions do occur. The Facebook pages of Imam Bousso and Oustaz Mbaye feature multiple videos of women saying the *shahada*, in one case minutes before marriage to a Murid. NST carries an active internal discourse about making Bamba known in the whole world. They are strongly committed to this, and I have personally been on the receiving end of their *da'wah*; sometimes it has felt like 'love bombing'. At the 2017 *magal*, an NST leader greeted me loudly by my Senegalese name, Malick, gave me a big hug and asked, 'Are you ready to become a Muslim?' (NST2).

There are non-Senegalese converts to Murid Islam who do not speak Wolof. Zain Abdullah, who did his fieldwork pre-2010 observed Murids in Harlem during the time of Belozi Harvey. His research showed some African Americans participated actively in Murid events and community life. He also reported on the barriers to integration and sources of conflict and misunderstanding between African American Muslims and African Muslim migrants. For example, African Murids loved Martin Luther King, Jr, but the African American Murids in Harlem more closely identified with Malcolm X. Doing my fieldwork ten years after Abdullah did his research, I found virtually no African Americans participating in Murid community life. Perhaps the death of Belozi was the end of an era.

In the section that follows, I present three brief vignettes of Murid converts from different backgrounds and differing levels of involvement. They have all found something they appreciate, and yet even the most involved seem to be on the periphery of the community, unable to participate as insiders. Inviting people to Islam and to embrace the moral philosophy of Shaykh Amadu Bamba is an integral part of how Murids share their spiritual and ethical values with the world. The experience of these converts suggests that

they may embrace the moral philosophy of Bamba but struggle to find where they fit within the community.

Younger African American woman

This woman grew up in a Lutheran Church but did not go to church in college. Part of her journey towards self-discovery was researching the Civil Rights Movement, particularly the biography of Malcolm X. This, in turn, led to an exploration of African religion and she encountered a Sufi shaman herbalist. Exploring meditation and alternative healing with this person led her to study the Qur'an and to join the Bawa Muhainwadeen Fellowship[36] in Virginia where she met Shaykh Abdoulaye Dièye. About her encounter with Dièye, she said:

> Certain spiritual people are accessible to certain people who know how to access the spirits of those who passed on. Dièye sat on the bed and declared that he and founder of the Bawa Muhainwadeen Fellowship were of the same purpose. He practised 'healing of the soul', he could access the angelic record to assist the person needing healing. In a one-on-one conversation, he looked at me, and I could see energy in his eyes. He asked me if I remember him. He told me, 'I love you as you love me.' He asked me to touch his head. I felt ecstasy. I had found my spiritual teacher I had arrived home (MCM7 2018).

Her journey to the Muridiyya was through another Sufi order and then an encounter with Dièye. This African American woman is the only convert from a Christian background that I encountered during my research.[37]

African American chaplain

This Muslim woman is the official chaplain for MICA and a board member. Registered with the city, she carries out visitation in hospitals. Speaking about her family she says, 'I have some Muslim and some Christian. My family is very deeply spiritual. We have,

[36] Muhammad Raheem Bawa Muhaiyaddeen, a Sufi mystic, can best be remembered for his efforts to bring unity through understanding to the faithful of all religions. https://www.bmf.org/about/bawa-muhaiyaddeen/

[37] I also interviewed one woman, a former Murid, who grew up in Senegal and migrated to New York. She became ill and through healing prayer at a French speaking church in Harlem, eventually was healed. This led to a time of searching a dream and choosing to commit her life to Jesus. At which point she made a definitive break from Islam and Muridiyya.

you know, a lot of different spiritual faiths but we all come together spiritually, and we support each other in what we believe in' (MICA 9 2018). She was a Muslim before joining the Murids. She made her *njebal* to Shaykh Bethio Thioune over the telephone in 2005. She added, 'the strange thing after I did that was that I started dreaming about Serigne Mourtada Mbacké and I came to New York City and started working in the community here' (MICA 9 2018). She does not speak Wolof. Twice she travelled to Touba where she was deeply impressed by the spirituality and intellect of the shaykhs. But when asked what she liked about her time in Touba, she indicated that she spent most of her time reading the Qur'an in her room.

She calls herself 'an African American indigenous Muslim' (MICA 9 2018) and talks about connections between African American Muslims, Nation of Islam and the Muridiyya. When asked if there were any regular connections between these groups, she replied emphatically, 'They have no connection whatsoever, none at all. Other than they know about each other' (MICA 9 2018). Even though she is on the MICA board, as a non-Wolof speaker and a woman, she only appears on the edge of events.

An older white man

I met an older white American who lives in Manhattan, during the Bamba day parade. He converted to Islam because of the kindness and friendship of a Murid street vendor. The vendor was returning to Senegal and pressured him to become a Muslim. He interpreted this to be the man offering him the best gift that he could offer. Because of their friendship, he did not want to reject the offer. The fruit seller had asked him repeatedly to convert to Islam, and finally, before he departed for Senegal, they went together to Daara Ji. The white American calls himself that a 'bad' Muslim, because he likes to drink vodka, but a 'good' Baay Faal. He was 'happy to say the *shahada*' (MCM10 2018a) but on his terms (i.e. he committed to his understanding of who God and Mohammad are, not

an Islamic understanding). He says he is not going to do anything else (prayers, fasting, etc.) related to Islam.

This man has a Ph.D. in philosophy, writing his dissertation on Aristotle. He reads Greek and likes to bring out his Bible, with an English-Greek translation. His floor to ceiling bookcase covers two walls of his living room. His mother is Japanese and his father, Jewish. He worked on a *kibbutz* in Israel in the late 70s. He served in the United States navy. He and his wife have been married since 1986. On occasion, they host me when I am in New York.

Oustaz Mbaye at Daara Ji told me about this conversion when I interviewed him at his house in Touba, Senegal. He told me of an older white man who said the *shahada* but told him he liked to drink alcohol and was not ready to give it up. Oustaz Mbaye's account of what transpired agreed with what the man told me. His counsel to the man, that 'saying the *shahada* is one step and then slowly God will convict him of other things and change him little by little' (DJ1 2018), aligns with Dièye's pedagogy of gradual conversion and the ecumenism of other Sufis. When this convert reported the Oustaz's counsel to me, he added that he is 'thinking about giving up drinking' (MCM10 2018b).

7.2.8 Analysing converts' stories

I sketched the portraits of three persons from different cultural and religious backgrounds who all, for diverse reasons, found themselves attracted to Bamba and converted to Murid Islam. None of them learned Wolof or expressed an intention to do so. The two African American women made firm commitments to the Muridiyya. Both pledged allegiance to a Murid shaykh (*njebel*), they attempt to find their place within the Muridiyya, and both help to organise and promote the goals and vision of MICA. As far as I know, the white American's only participation is to attend the Bamba Day parade.

The two African American women expressed frustration that they know how to do things, the way things work in America, but that Wolof people do not listen. I witnessed

a discussion between the younger African American woman who grew up in a Christian family, and the MICA general secretary about finding a building to rent for the 2019 *magal*, which happened to fall on a Sunday. The general secretary was trying to work out a deal with the church that they had used multiple times in the past. She expressed some exasperation as she told him that renting a church building on a Sunday would not work. Eventually, her counsel won the day, and they found another building. Both women converts continue to participate in African American Muslim communities. For example, they take a class together from Imam Talib, a friend of the late Malcolm X.

Another convert is a man from the Caribbean who came to the United States 40 years ago. He first joined the Nation of Islam and then later became a Murid because he liked the message of Amadu Bamba. Even though he frequents Murid events, he told me, 'sometimes I feel like a stepchild because I do not speak Wolof and am not from Senegal. [Murids] don't know how to spread the blessing. They keep it all to themselves and don't really have space for others' (MCM16 2018). He seems to have accepted that he can attend events but that he will always be an outsider. He expressed some pain about not being entirely accepted. Insightfully, he observed that Murids are squandering the gifts they have for the world because they keep them for themselves instead of sharing. This man from the Caribbean, the convert I know the least about, was the most articulate in his criticism. His remarks remind me of the Wolof proverb, *Wolof Njaay nee na, Gan, bëtëm dafa rey, waye mënul yewey bey* (A guest has big eyes, but he cannot untie a goat). As a guest with big eyes, he sees problems in the household, but he is not capable of resolving them.

NST members are among those who articulate the internal discourse of Murids about *da'wah* and about sharing the teachings of Bamba with the world. Observing their second annual membership day allowed me to listen as they talked about themselves and

their vision. The event ended with a surprise celebration that brings me back to questions about their prioritization of *da'wah*.

7.3 NST Membership Day: vision casting and conversion celebration

Arriving at the Malian Association building, the first thing I saw when I entered was a poster from the 'Shaykh Ahmadou Bamba, A Muslim Peacemaker' series in the stairwell. Two more from the series were on display at the front of the room. When I arrived at the NST Membership Day Oustaz Mbaye was leading the evening prayer. I waited with a dozen other men in the hallway. When the evening prayers finished, I entered the room and found a place to sit among some men I had not met before. They told me they were NST members from Hoboken, NJ and that NST is in 'every city where Murids have settled'. Looking around the room, I counted a minimum of 40 women and 60 men, estimating with the constant flux of people in and out at least 120 people present. At the back of the room, a photographer and her helper had set up with a white screen backdrop and umbrella reflector/light source and machine to print the plastic member cards. The MC announced that the purpose of the meeting was to get membership cards and to pay the $20/month dues. Picture-taking and dues-paying continued throughout the evening.

Almost immediately after the prayers ended, the Daara Ji *kurel xassaid* started singing, 16 men in a circle for twenty minutes without microphones or wooden bookstands, a somewhat informal presentation. As often happens, they ended with the supplication '*Yah rabbana*' (Our Lord)[38] and everyone holding out their hands to catch the *baraka* and then wiping their faces, signalling the end of the *xassaid* singing and the start of the formal programme for the evening.

[38] Qur'an 3:15-17, 3:52-54, 5:83-85 and many other references, 'These selections from the Holy Qur'an present supplications made to Allah (swt) by the Angels, Prophets Abraham, Ismail, David, Jesus and their companions, the righteous, those who believe, those who are oppressed and ill-treated, and by those who sincerely repent' (Zahoor & Haq 1998).

The first presenter spoke about the birth of NST as a *dahira*. In his retelling of the story, he linked the movement to a recommendation by Shaykh Mame Mor Mbacké:

> [He] instructed us that NST must have a public presence, second, we must have a mission of changing certain *jiiko* (habits) of young people because the city tempts people away from God, the Prophet and Serigne Touba. We are to meet monthly to *jang ay xassaid* (chant the *xassaid*) and to pull together our funds to give to *Ker Serigne bi*. The work of NST is to serve in any events happening in the city. NST participates with our strength, knowledge and financial support. For example, Bamba day, the *Magal*, and other events like the *xassaid* day have been, practically, entrusted to us. It's our responsibility. NST members help with all events; it's part of our responsibility is to serve, *khidma*.[39]

This man's retelling of the birth of NST is different from the story told by the persons present at the inaugural meeting of NST who I interviewed only a month after its birth. His retelling inserts the Shaykh into the origin story, when in fact they started NST and then later got the blessing of Shaykh Mame Mor Mbacké. The retelling provides a window into the way disciples and shaykhs rely upon, even create each other:

> A *Shaikh* might have a remarkable array of knowledge, skills and talents, but even the most extraordinary person, if left unrecognised is unable to exercise that role. Abilities are necessary, but ultimately the relationship is utterly dependent on follower recognition … People essentially confirm authority and through that make a leader. (Aždajić 2020:108)

Aspirants preserve their agency even as they give authority to the *shaykh*, something of a negotiated strategy where the disciple appears to give over authority to the *shaykh* and yet at the same time gains power through the association. This is the kind of 'limited and limiting power relationship' that requires both consent and resistance, misunderstanding and appropriation'(Bell 1992:8). The first presenter's retelling of the NST origin story gave the Shaykh the initiatory role in the creation of NST. By 'pretending' that the initiative came from the Shaykh he makes the Shaykh greater, amplifying his accomplishments and in so doing he places NST in the position of 'making' the *shaykh,* thus asserting greater agency for NST. I don't mean to exaggerate; Shaykh Mame Mor Mbacké was well established before NST connected with him. This is a future-oriented connection solidifying the influence of the Shaykh into the next generation of leaders in New York.

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[39] Transcription from my audio recording, 31 March 2019.

The second speaker reminded members of the NST mission statement and their vision to be a unifying force:

> Our vision to *xeex ak dëkk bi* (fight the city), the youth in the United States born here and those who came, *danuy recc* (they get lost) our work is to pull them into our group, to put them into Islam and the way of Shaykh Amadu Bamba, *Khadimou Rassoul*. NST is a movement the brings together the other *dahiras* in New York [he listed some of the *dahiras*]. We respect the older members of the Murid community and look to MICA for certain perspectives and counsel.[40]

The idea that NST is bringing together other *dahiras* is an expression of a classically Wolof gift for integration, the pulling together of people, seeking unity. In Senegal, some say there is no such thing as a Wolof ethnic group, that instead, it is a combination of elements of different ethnic groups, languages and cultural values that became the Wolof ethnic group. When I first visited Senegal, I experienced the strong push for me to learn Wolof greetings, even just a word or two and their desire to give me a Wolof family name so that I would be connected. NST is working hard to integrate the *Tijan* youth into their activities, sometimes attending *Tijan* events. At the Black National Theater, I witnessed the president of the *Tijan* youth delivering cases of beverages to the 2018 *Magal*, assisting NST in their *khidma* to the Murid community. Short speeches by NST president and Tijan youth president accompanied the gift all recorded with video cameras, bright lights and microphones on the sidewalk as it is delivered, the drinks visible in the open trunk of the minivan.

At the NST membership day two women speakers, contrary to most of the other speakers who used only Wolof, chose to speak in English, their notes on an iPad. The first woman said:

> NST started with the goal of helping the work of our elders. We work together hand-in-hand at all events (she then gave a list of activities they have helped at in NYC and across the USA). The NST vision and goal is to spread the teaching of Serigne Touba in the whole of America and the whole world.[41]

[40] Transcription from my audio recording, 31 March 2019.
[41] Transcription from my audio recording, 31 March 2019.

The second woman got into the details of what sharing Serigne Touba with the whole world meant to her:

> To build a community where everybody can fit in, not just a community for only Murids, but a community where anybody walking in will feel comfortable. have a place of our own, a building for NST, a building where you can walk in and learn about Serigne Touba's teaching, learn *xassaid*, a place where you feel like you are in a family, a place where you are going to learn to be a better Muslim and a better disciple.[42] (NST14 2019)

Her short-term goals included doing a social project, lending a hand to newly-arrived disciples who need help finding a job, place to live, etc. help them take the first step to a better life, and to spread their work via the social media. She shared that with their message and activities they can 'break the barrier about conflicts, talking about violence, we spread "the message" by our unity' (NST14 2019). In the context of her other comments, 'the message', is Bamba's message of nonviolence. She continued, describing their mission:

> We have what we call 'mission': we use Bamba's teaching as a guide in our mission. We want to make 'Bamba everywhere' a real thing. Make it real that every person has heard of Bamba and knows his teaching. Something that I want everyone to remember that is crucial. Bamba is the key to everything. Bamba is the one that will show you the right way. His teaching is something that will guide you everywhere. NST is open to everybody, Bamba never closed his doors to anyone, so we will never do that (NST14 2019).

'Bamba everywhere' references a popular song, in Wolof, '*Bamba fii, Bamba fey, Bamba fepp'* (Bamba here, Bamba there, Bamba everywhere). [43] She called for their collective commitment to *da'wah* that every person would hear of Bamba, know his teaching and feel welcomed into NST.

Multiple other NST officers gave short addresses or instructions about upcoming activities or how to pay dues. One was a woman in charge of logistics for their participation in the *xassaid* days Louisville, KY about airline requirements, liquids etc. One group of 23 planned to fly, and there would be two cars driving. After her a man followed, who gave instructions about behaviour and respect at the *xassaid* day, including

[42] Transcription from my audio recording, 31 March 2019.
[43] Singer inside Les Ambassades restaurant, Harlem. Fieldwork notes 7 November 2017.

assignments about work committees and responsibilities. Another intervention was a well-researched and clear presentation in English about immigration, 'ICE can't arrest you without a warrant. You don't have to give information. You should ask for a lawyer.'[44]

After all these speakers and announcements, the group reset and settled. The NST president used the moment to give an impassioned speech, 'NST was founded to b*eggante suñ biir* (love one another) and j*appalante* (help one another). This is the peace that we care about, to visit the sick'[45] (NST4 2019). Then Oustaz Mbaye came back to the front for what appeared to be a much-anticipated message on proper washing before prayer (first half) and after sex (second half of teaching). He urged everyone to get out their phones and record his message for future reference and to share with others. The instructions about ritual washing after sexual intercourse included threats or consequences of not doing this correctly. 'If you don't do this everything you do afterwards is a sin, any child born after sex without proper washing is born in sin or will be stillborn' (Mbaye 2019). The message was that 'sex makes you impure and praying in an impure state is a sin, so make sure you do the required washing'. The attitude of the audience was one of the people drinking deeply and appreciatively from a trusted source.

After he spoke the event was over, People had begun putting away chairs and picking up trash, then came a surprise. Someone announced that a young woman wanted to make the confession of faith, to say the *shahada*. Everyone stopped what they were doing and gathered around her and the Imam. He led her in the prayer in Arabic, then helped her to repeat it in English, saying that he wanted to make sure she understood what she was saying. The crowd surrounding her was delighted, and they began a Baay Faal chant praising Shaykh Ibrahima Faal. They placed the young convert in front of the

[44] Fieldnote, 31 March 2019.
[45] Christians would recognize that his speech sounded like it was Matthew 25: a kind of list defining what service to the poor and vulnerable means and a John 17 'love one another' kind of talk.

singers, who sang for 6-10 minutes while she stood in the middle of 50 or more people with phones recording or live streaming the moment on Facebook. In the spotlight, she looked a mixture of happy, nervous, and bewildered. The gathered community was exuberant. The next day, I found the video on the Facebook pages of multiple NST members as well as that of Oustaz Mbaye.

7.3.1 Analysing the NST Membership Day

The speakers at the NST Membership Day illustrate the prevailing discourse of Murids in Harlem and their vision to reach out, of having a mission to make Bamba known everywhere. Their vision includes sharing the teaching and example of Bamba and Islamic *da'wah*. A significant part of the discourse was about working for Bamba and reaching beyond themselves, while at the same time, the ways they meet and interact, and the activities they plan, are geared towards insiders. I witnessed this kind of discourse at the UN in multiple presentations. Also at the home of the corner store owner for lunch, after the 2018 parade, I overheard some men discussing, in Wolof, what it would take to get lots of white people at the Bamba Days parade and the UN conference. One man was saying, 'we are doing it all wrong' and others were defending the status quo. I suspect neither of these men comprehends the 'white' audience that they say they want to reach. This dissonance between discourse and practice is familiar to me as a white Christian. Like the NST members, our church community talks extensively about reaching out and mission, yet often failing to comprehend our audience, plan and act in ways that inadvertently prevent the very thing we want from happening.

The discourse of the presenters at the NST membership day matches the comments made just before the Friday prayers at the mosque the day before the 2018 Parade:

> A great work for Serigne Touba and to show Islam. It shows that we are calling all the people of the nation … All the world is called to join Islam; that is what Serigne Touba lived. What we are doing is the work of showing … The *nasaran* (the Christians) that caught him and persecuted him [that] the day would come that *nasarans* would be his followers and that they would themselves promote Islam. *Nasarans* will join and help him. This day has arrived! So, what we are doing is significant, it is the

> work of Serigne Touba. You need to do your best. In a country like this, you left your country voluntarily this is not *gàddaay* (exodus). You left a Muslim nation to go to a *nasaran* nation to look for money. This is not *gàddaay*. It is *tukki* (travel). This is immigration.[46]

In a similar vein, speeches at Africa Square following the parade and again at the UN conference, speakers referred to the parade as 'a witness' (*seede*). NST leaders who presented at the Membership Day, by their speech show that they are part of the larger New York Muridiyya conversation about sharing Bamba with outsiders and about *da'wah*. The internal understanding of what is happening in these public events is encompassed by the phrase, 'doing the work of Serigne Touba'. Externally, it would be fair to say that few of the *nasarans*, their perceived audience, understand the witness being offered. What outsiders see is a strange cultural event, fun or exciting perhaps, but not something they understand as an alternative religious or cultural option. For example, most outsiders would reject the teaching on ritual washing after sex and the implied message that the sex act itself makes a person unclean. The majority of the presentations are in Wolof, thus inaccessible to outsiders, but the subject matter if understood would be offensive to many, perhaps even the young woman who converted.

This young woman saying the *shahada* at the end of the NST membership day offers a window into Murid *da'wah* in New York. It was not clear to me if the young woman was there for the entire evening or brought in at the end because the Oustaz Mbaye was there, or if she was brought in as some 'trophy' to motivate the faithful. A group of young women friends there supported her, yet after her confession of faith, she was pushed to the centre and surrounded by the men, the Murid women pulled back, leaving the young woman self-consciously standing before 25-30 men loudly singing a Baay Faal chant and people recording the moment on their phones. The women friends also recorded

[46] From fieldwork notes, July 27, 2018, unidentified speaker giving an encouragement at the mosque, just before the *xutba.* He spoke in Wolof but my notes were taken in English.

the moment, but from the perimeter. The public conversion of the young woman served more to symbolically support their internal discourse than any other motive.

NST members at the Membership Day were engaged in what Abdoul Aziz Mbacké described as ‘we speak more to ourselves than to others … when we discuss our moral and ethical values … we speak Wolof. It's always from us to us’ (SEN3 2018). This type of speech serves to bolster the faithful. The conversion of a young woman is as much or more about the success of the community and a confirmation of their sense of being ‘in the truth’ (MICA4 2019) than it is about the young woman’s transformation. The experience of other converts in the New York Muridiyya shows that they found it difficult to truly become part of the community, hindered by linguistic and cultural barriers.

Looking back at Abdoulaye Dièye’s model for sharing Murid values with outsiders provides a way to evaluate the activities and presentations at the membership day. Speakers at the meeting held a high priority for the conversion of foreigners and demonstrated that they do put this into practise as demonstrated by young women members of NST bringing their non-Murid friend to the event to convert. In this case, their discourse and practice agree. Wolof was the primary language used by those speaking. Although this was not a public event, speaking Wolof presents a barrier to converts, thus a contradiction of their commitment to prioritize the conversion of foreigners. The presentations by Oustaz Mbaye focused on specific Islamic concerns about ritual purity, a different approach than Dièye who sought to focus on universal truths.

7.4 Conclusion

There are two major points to make about Murid discourse concerning what they believe they have to offer the world: one, their talk is bigger than the actual impact, and two, their practice, i.e. their real contributions, however small, are significant. The fact that there is discourse is, in and of itself, valuable. By thinking, talking, and believing,

they dare to act or put these elements into practice. This reflection—praxis circle is always at work and communities as well as individuals rotate through the cycle, at variable rates.

As an outsider and an occasional visitor to the Murid diaspora of Harlem, I can only claim to have had a glimpse of the discourse and practice of the community. I gathered this information by observing and listening in the community, by participating in events and ordinary conversations, by seeing what people post on their Facebook pages, by reading what people wrote in the MICA magazine, and other publications. Some of the discourse and practice takes place on the public stage of the Cultural Weeks Shaykh Ahmadou Bamba events like the parade, speeches, and UN conference. At other times, the conversation occurs at the intermediate events like the NYC *magal* and Ramadan celebrations which are large, but internally oriented community events. More of the discourse and practice happens in smaller and more private settings, *dahira* meetings, homes, and casual conversations.

Across the Muridiyya, whether in Senegal or the diaspora, they believe that they have something to offer the world. Murids are talking about this on the street in New York, in the youth *dahira* NST, at the mosque, and in the academic presentations at MICA's annual conference at the United Nations building. I have indicated how Murids in New York share their spiritual and ethical values, including nonviolence, with the world. I also show the difficulties that Murids have in moving from discourse to practice. An additional complication is that often the Murid witness is not understood by outsiders. Supporting the thesis of this chapter, that Murids in New York share their spiritual and ethical values with outsiders following patterns first established by Shaykh Abdoulaye Dièye, I used examples of sharing with outsiders, observed in my fieldwork, and compared each with practices that Dièye had already used to share Bamba and the Muridiyya with outsiders.

I showed that the first Keur Serigne Touba house and *dahira* in Brooklyn followed Dieye's approach through its attempts to connect the intellectual and universal truths of Bamba with the concerns of African American Muslims. They prioritized conversion including outreach on the campus of Columbia University. They used English, translating Bamba's poem *Sindidi* into English, and produced a newsletter. Ultimately transitions and changing needs of the Murid migrant community led to the closure of the house and school in Brooklyn but many other initiatives continued.

There were a few early movements towards interfaith activities with Shaykh Mourtada Mbacké and more recently positive relationships with churches from whom they rent meeting places. NST members have engaged in Sufi drumming and dance with members of a yoga centre.

Cultural Weeks Shaykh Ahamadou Bamba is the most public act of the New York Muridiyya. I showed ways that Murids share the message of Bamba through the parade, speeches and papers presented at their conference, and how some Murids understand the parade as a witness. I compared the parade to Sufi religious processions in India and to the Mexican Day parade in NYC showing that the parade can also be considered an act of peacemaking or a reconciliation invitation to the onlookers.

I gave special attention to the exhibition created by a transnational partnership between Columbia University professors, a *shaykh* in Touba and a leader in the NYC Murid community. The poster exhibition represents the most carefully prepared attempt to communicate Murid spiritual and ethical values to non-Murids. Its presentation of Bamba as a Muslim peacemaker follows a Dièye-influenced approach: it is in English, and focuses on the intellectual and universal truths of Bamba; it communicates through both text and image in ways that outsiders can understand without being put off by foreignness. Indeed, at numerous public events the parade, at one of the NY *magals*, and

at the NST barbecue in Morningside Park, I watched non-Murids who stopped and spent a few minutes reading the posters on display.

I showed how Murid intellectuals are publishing about Bamba and the Muridiyya in English in the academic realm. Moreover, I shared the example of a coffee-maker who takes his Café Touba blend to the streets to share about Bamba, the peace fighter. The coffee peace fighter and exhibition creators share the same goal, spreading the peace of Bamba, although their lives and their means of doing so are divergent.

There are converts to the Muridiyya from a variety of backgrounds. I showed that although Murids talk a lot about their priority on conversion, they do not follow through in ways that allow these converts to enter into the community fully. Language and culture issues make this problematic, but one convert went further, saying that in his experience Murids are selfish by keeping all the blessing for themselves.

Using the experience of the NST Membership Day, I analysed the way young Murids talk about their mission and vision, their discourse about what they say they have to offer the world. I showed that in some instances they are following through, particularly in their efforts to win converts. But I also showed that more of their talk is simply to each other, serving to build up their sense of being in the truth but not necessarily translating into action or activity that outsiders would understand or through which they would discover the message of Bamba, the nonviolent Muslim peacemaker.

Murids who desire to contribute to the global discourse about Muslims and their contributions either to violence or nonviolence need to follow the example of Dièye, but to succeed they will need to go beyond Dièye, towards a serious engagement with Christian and Jewish peace/nonviolent movements. This might include Christian pacifists teaching at Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba University in Touba, for example, or more regularly organizing conferences like the one at Columbia University in 2015 and publishing the papers presented.

Murids desire to share their spiritual and ethical values with the world, but sometimes they talk mostly to each other instead of the world they want to influence. A fresh look at the way Abdoulaye Dièye pioneered the use of Western languages for teaching and sharing Bamba's message is needed. He brought an intellectual approach to Bamba's thought, presenting the universal validity of Bamba's message. Dièye prioritized the conversion of foreigners. He focused on organizing and influencing students, often through conferences. His efforts to publish journal articles and books oriented towards outsiders as well as his interfaith singing, prayers, and meetings, continue to offer a path that Murids in Harlem could follow as they *liggéeyal Serigne Touba* (work for Amadu Bamba) in New York City.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION: MURID NONVIOLENCE IN THE AMERICAN CONTEXT

8.1 Summary and Findings

This dissertation begins with a classic element of ethnographic writing, the 'arrival scene'. I sat awkwardly in a Murid family-owned corner store in Harlem, holding my backpack and suitcase. The store owners and their customers sized me up while I felt conspicuously aware that I was a *toubab* (common Wolof appellation for a white foreigner). I explained that I was interested in the practices of peace and nonviolence of the followers of Shaykh Amadu Bamba. Thus, I began my journey of exploration into the world of another nonviolent or pacifist community radically different from my Anabaptist tradition and yet so familiar. Seeking to understand my Murid interlocutors in the New York diaspora provoked a reflexive process of discovery about myself, my perceptions and biases.

The final chapter reviews the research question that provoked this investigation, the strategies I employed to find answers, and the central argument I developed based on the evidence discovered. My research was limited to Murids in New York City, primarily in Harlem, with occasional references to Murids elsewhere in the US and Senegal. My central argument is that Murids in New York by continuing a lived practice of nonviolence learned from their founder, have contributions to make to ongoing American conversations about Islam, Muslim immigrants, and *jihad*. My research reveals the complicated dance of discourse and practice of a Senegalese Muslim immigrant community finding its place in American society while at the same time attempting to remain true to their religious and ethical commitments. In this way, my research makes contributions to Migration Studies (particularly within the theme of migration and religion), diaspora Sufi studies, Peace Studies, and more broadly to the global public

discourse on Islam and violence. The final section of the conclusion offers suggestions for further research that emerged in my investigations but which I could not pursue.

There is a negative American discourse about Islam and immigration. I discovered in the Muridiyya of New York a counter-narrative to the familiar 'Islam as threat' trope that underlies most conversations regarding Islam in post 9/11 America. The consistent pushback I have received in response to my research, 'Aren't you naively romanticizing these Murids?' and, 'Are they telling you the truth?' confirms the strength of this trope. African Muslim immigrant communities tend to be invisible to academics and Americans in general. The gifts and potential contributions of these minority Muslim communities are relatively unknown and under-utilized. My research highlights the contributions of these invisible Muslims to potentially shift American conversations away from threat narratives toward inclusive and constructive dialogue. My research question asked, 'How does the traditional Muridiyya value of nonviolence impact the way Murids live and interact with other communities in New York City?' Two important sub-questions bolstered this question: 'How and to what extent do Murids practise (or not) the spiritual and ethical values of their order as they interact with other communities?' and 'How and to what extent are the Murids in New York developing 'practices' and concepts of nonviolence?'

Preliminary evidence showed that the answers to these questions would be fruitful and bring a Murid contribution to the American discourse about Islam and violence. Murids in New York City offer the counter-narrative of a nonviolent Muslim community committed to peacemaking. My research opens up alternative conversations about Islam and violence with the potential to reshape perceptions of Muslim immigrants in the American context. The minority witness of a pacifist Muslim community offers an alternative perception of how Muslim immigrants fit into secular society, and the contributions such communities make to the well-being of America.

I began with a thick ethnographic description of the research field in Harlem, locating my research firmly in the American Murid diaspora. The presence of a pacifist African Sufi Muslim migrant community in post 9/11 New York City presents an unparalleled opportunity to investigate Muslim expressions of nonviolence. I closed the introductory chapter with a Christian missiological question that I often asked during my fieldwork and in interviews, 'What gifts do Murid immigrants bring to their new communities?' The answers form a significant part of my argument that these invisible Muslims have much to contribute to creating a peaceful and healthy community life in America.

Seeking to understand the living Murid community in New York and their discourse about peace and nonviolence, I first turned back in history to the origins of the Muridiyya and their founder, Shaykh Amadu Bamba. My primary lens was nonviolence, specifically what influenced Bamba towards nonviolence and what practices of nonviolence did he develop? My research into primary and secondary sources led to an excavation of the foundations of the Muridiyya. Using nonviolence as my lens allowed me to write a new and comprehensive perspective on Bamba's life and practice as a peacemaker.

Bamba as peacemaker and nonviolent leader is a perspective claimed by the Murids in the New York diaspora. I found that their claims have a basis in actual events in the life of Bamba; at critical moments he chose nonviolent and pacifist options. He had many enemies, both Wolof and French, but he sought reconciliation and offered forgiveness. He developed tactics for avoiding violence and at the same time remaining true to his calling. When he learned that he was going to be arrested, he went to meet the force coming to arrest him instead of risking confrontation between his disciples and the soldiers. In court, he activated nonviolent resistance when he performed two prayer cycles towards Mecca. His poem about his imprisonment in a cramped cell reveals that in his struggle to not turn towards violence, he had visions of his mother and of Muhammed

who both encouraged him to turn away from violence. When he returned from exile, he publicly forgave the French. Eventually, he pursued a path of accommodation that allowed the Murid community and the French colonial state to benefit and prosper mutually.

What is rarely commented on by Murids in the New York diaspora or by most of the literature on the Muridiyya is what influenced Bamba towards this remarkable commitment to nonviolence. My lens of nonviolence helped me to discover a combination of internal and external influences that shaped and developed his commitment to and practice of nonviolence. A major external force was his childhood experience as a victim of violent *jihad* when he and his family experienced displacement, loss of income, and loss of life. His response to this displays an internal resilience of character, he meditated, wrote poetry and found hope that the future could be better. Bamba's grandfather, Mame Marem, was himself oriented towards nonviolence. Bamba's family connection to the Qadiriyya Sufi order opened links to the Jakhanke clerics, and thus Bamba's education was nourished and influenced from a much older Suwarian West African peace tradition. His education aligned and shaped his sense of calling and his self-understanding as *Khadimatul Khadim* (servant of the servant) with a particular commitment to serving Muhammed and modelling his life after the suffering Prophet in Mecca.

Yet another influence upon Bamba comes from the Abrahamic faith tradition. Bamba was a devoted student of the Qur'an, the Hadith, and Sufi writings which all reference material found in the Torah and the Bible. In Chapter Three, I made my case for why I believe he was also directly influenced by the life and teaching of Jesus by his reading of the Bible. One of my contacts in New York told me of his appreciation for the Bible, which he first discovered by studying Shakespeare, and his struggle to convince fellow Murids to consider reading the Bible instead of rejecting it. Murids already engage

interfaith conversations from time-to-time, acknowledging that Bamba sometimes drew from Biblical and Abrahamic faith resources would facilitate interfaith engagements. After a deep engagement with historical material about the founder, my research jumps from the early 20th Century to the early 21st Century and the living Muridiyya in New York City.

Murid migrant entrepreneurs began settling in Harlem in the 1980s when Harlem was a poor and dangerous neighbourhood with few, if any, services. These migrants found cheap rents and saw opportunities for starting businesses ranging from ambulating vendors to hair-braiding shops to gipsy cab services. At the same time, they started new *dahiras* and community organisations like the *Association des Senegalese en Amerique* and the Murid Islamic Community of America. Their presence contributed to the revitalization of Harlem and its ongoing gentrification. At the heart of all these activities was the strong need for community and fellowship, creating, for Murid migrants, a place of belonging and a connection to faith and compatriots. Relationships also developed with African American Muslims in Harlem, as the first president of MICA, Belozi Harvey, was a prime mover in generating positive relations with city authorities that led to the pronouncement of July 28 as Shaykh Amadu Bamba Day and the annual parade. Throughout this initial twenty-years' period, Murids in New York saw themselves as temporary migrants with their orientation and energy directed towards the homeland, towards family members in Senegal and their *shaykhs* in Touba. Murids helped African Americans make connections to African roots and spiritual guides in Touba, even as these same African Americans helped them make connections in New York. The primary image of Bamba was of a Sufi saint who had resisted French colonial domination, a hero for black Muslims.

The aftermath of the attack on the World Trade Center caused a dramatic shift of circumstances for all Muslims living in New York. Following 9/11, American discourse

about Islam and Muslims, especially Muslim immigrants, became a narrative of threat and fear. In the decade that followed, massive government anti-terror efforts and many private political efforts to capitalise on the fear of Muslims combined to create an atmosphere of fear and suspicion. The Murids I interviewed told me of the ways that this impacted them at school, work or on public transit. Another factor at work in the community was a growing realisation that they were in the United States to stay; families had children born in New York; returning to Senegal was only a myth.

It is in this context that Murids began to reinterpret Bamba as a Muslim leader of nonviolence and to portray themselves as a nonviolent, pacifist Muslim community, something that had always been true of both Bamba and themselves, even if it had not been their primary self-image. The themes of the Bamba Day parade and UN conference in 2002 and following reflected this new understanding. More recently an understanding of Bamba as nonviolent Muslim leader changed into 'Shaykh Amadu Bamba: A Muslim Peacemaker' as revealed in the poster series created for an exhibition at Columbia University in 2015. Peacemaking themes also began to appear in Murid presentations about what they have to contribute to global discourses on Islam and violence. Murids believe they have something to share with other Muslims and the world.

The rise of second-generation youth who see themselves as ambassadors of Amadu Bamba is also shifting Murid self-understanding. Ndawi Serigne Touba arises out of the intergenerational tensions within the New York Muridiyya and the growing awareness of Murid youth of their bi-cultural position in a transnational religious order. NST embraces both a deep spiritual connection to Touba and being American. They are fully committed to serving Bamba by serving their community. Engaging unreservedly in ritual activities they have found empowerment, won respect from elders, and admiration from other youth. They see their mission as saving the lost Senegalese youth, serving the community,

engaging in *da'wah* and living the *yoonu jàmm*. *Yoonu jàmm* is the best Wolof translation of nonviolence or living in peace with all.

In Harlem, Wolof remains the primary language of Murids, Murid celebrations, and the teaching and sermons at the mosque. The growing number of Murid youth born and raised in New York is beginning to challenge this norm. During my fieldwork, I met children and youth, whose parents are Senegalese Murid immigrants, who do not speak Wolof. Teachers at the Murid Qur'anic schools are beginning to grapple with this and offering limited instruction in English and encouraging students to create reports and presentations on Bamba in English. Murid efforts to pass on their faith and values to their children currently rely on a combination of teaching at home, community events, sending children to study in Senegal for extended periods and on Qur'anic study in Harlem. The ritualized celebrations of the Murid calendar and the bodily participation of Murids continues to be the most effective way in which the community keeps and passes on the spiritual and ethical values of the Muridiyya. I predict a rapid change in which English use will soon overtake Wolof even in religious celebrations.

My central argument is that the Muridiyya in America offers a valuable and neglected counter-narrative to the 'Islam as threat' trope that underlies American discourse about Islam, violence and Muslim immigrants. The argument I make is that: (1) Bamba's childhood experience of living through a violent *jihad* influenced him towards peace. (2) The Mbacké family connection and history along with Bamba's education, place him squarely in the West African pacifist tradition of al-Hadji Sálim Suware and the Jakhanke clerics. (3) Bamba brought a community well-being hermeneutic to his reading of the Qur'an, to educating the masses and to his relations with the French. (4) Bamba is a complex, polysemic leader who modelled a lived practice of nonviolence for his followers. (5) Bamba's disciples in the diaspora look to his example in all things, including how they cultivate Murid space within secular society. Murid space provides a

secure community base from which they develop spiritual, ethical and cultural resources to engage the world. (6) A new generation of Murids, represented here by NST, devoted to Bamba, and thoroughly Murid and American, is emerging. (7) Murids in the New York diaspora actively engage in passing on their faith and create new adepts with ritual mastery who are adapting Murid ritual and practice to American realities. (8) Murids believe they have something to share with other Muslims and the world. Increasingly they attempt to share the nonviolent peace practices of Bamba with outsiders.

The Muridiyya in America is one voice among the various invisible Muslim communities who have contributions to make to society. The Muridiyya is complex and imperfect yet offers a helpful alternative to the 'Islam as threat' trope dominating American discourse about immigration, Islam and violence. Finding their place in this discourse forced American Murids to emphasize and articulate their historic commitment to nonviolence in new ways. Originally Bamba was known primarily as a teacher of Sufi Islam. Following Senegalese independence, people remembered him as a nonviolent resistance leader against colonialism. Prior to the attack on the World Trade Center in New York, this image of Bamba resisting oppression provided a bridge connecting Senegalese Murids to African Americans in the Civil Rights Movement and the Harlem Renaissance. The events of 9/11 subsequently caused Murids to develop a more elaborate peace discourse, reimagining Bamba as an African Muslim peacemaker. The American Muridiyya demonstrates a dynamic ability to flex and adapt to the challenges they negotiate as an immigrant community in America.

8.2 Contribution to the existing body of knowledge

This research set out to study Murid commitments to practices of peace and nonviolence in the American diaspora. My fieldwork approach was simple: to walk the streets, to meet people, to participate in the events and activities and places where people welcomed me and then to follow wherever those relationships would lead. My lens was peace and

nonviolence. Describing an African Sufi community in New York is a contribution to diaspora Sufi studies generally, to studies of Sufism in the American context, and to migration and transnational studies. My research offers the Muridiyya of New York as a point of reference for those studying Islam in America, African Muslim immigrants, peace and conflict studies, and Muslim nonviolence.

This thesis makes an important contribution to diaspora Sufi studies by making visible an African Sufi order in the United States. Dissertations on African diaspora communities and issues related to migration or transnationalism often include individual Murids as subjects (Salem 1981; Carter 1992; Cannon 2005; Cross 2010; Hannaford 2014; Beye 2014). However, only a few dissertation-length ethnographic studies of the Muridiyya in America or elsewhere have been carried out. Legault-Verdier (2016) did ethnographic fieldwork among Baay Faal's in Montreal and Kingsbury (2014), a multi-sited study on new Murid movements in Dakar and Brussels. My fieldwork reveals a Senegalese Sufi order in the diaspora community on the verge of becoming an American Sufi order. Diaspora Sufi studies will benefit from the ethnographic description of a Sufi order poised at the tipping point between 1st and 2nd generation leadership, and the transition from migrant to 2nd generation are citizens, or from being Murids in America to American Murids. Offering a look at a Sufi community at the point it begins to morph from a transplant to a hybrid (Hermansen 2000).

Questions about the role of ethnicity, with culture and language often serving as boundary markers, play a major role in diaspora Sufi studies (Geaves 2019). Wolof language and culture predominate in the Muridiyya, to the point that converts from other ethnolinguistic groups often feel side-lined and unable to fully participate. Yet, this research shows teachers in Murid Qur'anic schools responding to the needs of Murid children who do not speak Wolof by offering instruction in English. Some space is being made to accommodate American culture and English language.

A majority of the ever-growing body of secondary literature on the Muridiyya focuses on history, social and political science, economics, and more recently on migration and transnationality. My contribution to this body of literature comes from listening to and valuing what Murids said about themselves and their spiritual and ethical practices. I offer a fresh look at Shaykh Amadu Bamba and the Muridiyya in Senegal and the first ever look at how the spiritual and ethical values of Murids in the diaspora influence the ways they interact with other communities in the diverse and competitive spiritual economy of New York City.

This dissertation generates a new framework for understanding Bamba and the transnational Muridiyya through the lens of nonviolence. By reading Bamba and Murid history through this lens, I discovered connections to the much older Suwarian West African pacifist tradition. My contribution is to develop what Sanneh (1974 & 2016) gave as the defining characteristics of the Suwarian tradition and show that Bamba and the Muridiyya are in continuity with this tradition. I demonstrate that the Murids are firmly Suwarian in nature, just as Sanneh showed that the Jakhanke are living representatives of this tradition. I describe how Bamba adopted the core elements of the Suwarian tradition for himself and his disciples. I must stress the importance of this connection. Although Murids in New York may be unaware of their historical and spiritual connection to al-Hadji Sálim Suware, their impulses towards reconciliation, forgiveness, and peacemaking have deep roots. They are living representatives of a centuries-old West African pacifist tradition.

Developing a description of Bamba's practice of nonviolence provoked several persistent questions. How does Bamba compare to well-known pacifists? How does one compare religious pacifists from different faith traditions? And, by what standard can one compare different faith traditions of nonviolence? Many authors Murid and otherwise casually compare Bamba to Martin Luther King, Jr. or Mahatma Gandhi. I created a

theoretical framework to locate Bamba and the Muridiyya among other pacifist traditions. I chose an anthropological response to the ontology of violence as the starting point for locating a person or faith tradition within the diversity of groups claiming to be peaceful, pacifist or nonviolent. At the first level of differentiation, the framework sorts groups based on their response to violence (embracing, conditional, rejecting). Then on a secondary level, groups are sorted based on an engagement with the world (engaged or separated) and a tertiary level group based on their commitment to justice. With little or no modification, the framework is useful to evaluate and locate the position of any group claiming to be nonviolent or pacifist.

The idea of Muslim space is an essential concept for understanding Muslim minorities in Europe and America. Regarding Murids in the diaspora, I made a theoretical breakthrough. I connected Murid space making in the diaspora to Bamba's creation of *dar-al-muridiyya* within the *dar-al-kufr* of Diourbel when he was under house arrest. I showed that the ways Bamba created Murid space within French colonial Senegal offer a model for his disciples in Harlem. Then, using De Certeau's (1984) theory of *lieu* (place) and *espace* (space), I reinterpreted the making of Murid space as a social mechanism for peaceful relations with non-Muslims. Murid space is created and lived within the place controlled by others and does not demand political or territorial control. The concept of a Muslim space within secular, pluralistic non-religious society that does not need to control that place, directly confronts the fear that often undermines American discourse about the role of Muslim communities in society. Many Americans are afraid that Muslims are seeking to force Islamic law and custom upon them, hence the many anti-*shari'a* legislation attempts in state and local governments. This concept also confronts other American Muslim communities who seek 'a more prominent role for Islam' (Khan 2019:4). The concept of a Murid space that needs neither political or territorial control speaks to both sides of the issue, to Muslims it offers an alternative for living as a faithful

minority and to non-Muslims shows the possibility of a peaceful co-residence that leads to peace. There is more room in the liminal spaces of marginality that most people imagine. Allowing, even celebrating, the liminality of the margins may open the potential for new creative and positive forces for good to enter and benefit society.

The emergence of an American Muridiyya is not what I was expecting to find in Harlem. I was looking for Senegalese Murids living in New York City and the ways they remained true to their founder in a different context. That an American Muridiyya is emerging in New York is perhaps also a surprise to the original migrants from Senegal who established themselves in New York. They came as pioneers seeking economic opportunity, seeking the means to build a house, get married or support their families in Senegal. Adventurers in a foreign terrain, they sought the familiarity and support of fellow Murid migrants. The *dahiras* they established, the networks of support like MICA and ASA[1] were part of creating a support network, a place to belong, a place to worship, and people with whom to celebrate makeshift substitutes for *Ramadan, Tabaski* (Eid-al-Adha, also known as the Feast of Sacrifice)*, ngentes, gamous* (religious festival*)*, and the *Magal* of Touba (annual pilgrimage to Touba). Unable to travel to Senegal, they sought alternatives that enabled them to feel at home.

Inadvertently, the actions of these migrants began an unstoppable process. The local context began ever so subtly to impress itself upon these Senegalese Murids living in New York. The physical, social, and cultural context of the new location aggressively asserted its power and changed Murid rituals. As time went by, they married, and their children grew up speaking English and going to American schools. In some cases, their children in Senegal grew up and then came to New York for high school or university. Or, in yet another twist, children born in New York City were sent to Senegal to learn the Qur'an,

[1] Association des Sénégalaise D'Amérique.

Wolof, and Senegalese culture and then return to New York City for high school and university. These young Murids with a portion of their education in Senegal and another part in the United States know that they are no longer migrants, as they intend to make their lives in New York, Atlanta, or Columbus; they are Americans. Murid youth have different needs and different orientations than their elders. As Murids, Touba is still the permanent cardinal North of their spiritual compass, but their everyday concerns are oriented towards life and work in NYC, not Senegal.

One of the significant discoveries in my research was an interview with a young Murid actor in a Senegalese telenovela based in New York who told me of the creation of NST less than two months after its inception. My descriptions and analysis of NST, an emerging transnational Murid youth movement in New York City, as they negotiate intergenerational tensions to gain agency and status, is a contribution to youth and migration studies. I model an application of ritual theory to analyse the power dynamics in a diaspora community with intergenerational tensions. I apply the same analysis to the *shaykh-talibé* relationship of Mame Mor Mbacké and NST, showing that mastery and manipulation of ritual allowed NST to position themselves in the New York diaspora with more significant leadership and influence. A similar application of ritual theory to the new Murid movements in Dakar and elsewhere may offer alternative understandings of the motivations of the participants in those groups.

I characterize as 'American Murids' those who are American citizens (either by birth or naturalization), who went to high school or university in the United States, and who are fluent in English and Wolof. American Murids thrive in a transnational Murid space that is oriented spiritually towards Touba but settled in America. They are 100 per cent committed to Shaykh Amadu Bamba and possess the ritual mastery needed to transform and adapt Murid rituals to the American context. Carrying a robust Dièyenne

influence,[2] American Murids seek to make 'Bamba known everywhere' sharing his spiritual and ethical philosophy, engaging in *khidma* (service), *da'wah*, and *yoonu jàam* (path of peace*)*. American Murids are increasingly adopting American modes of childcare and roles of marriage. A select category of American Murids is American, not from a Senegambian ancestry but converts to Islam who joined the Muridiyya. Future researchers will evaluate and modify my definition of 'American Murid'.

8.3 Limitation and Scope for Further Research

I was unable to enter the lifeworlds of those Senegalese/Murid youths who the community calls 'lost.' These youths who are not participating in Murid community activities, speak primarily or exclusively English, and attempt to fit into the street culture of New York African American or create new street cultures of African immigrant youth. The young Murid survivor of a shooting in Harlem, whose story I tell in Chapter Five, is the closest I came to these members of the community. He defended the youth of 116th Street hinting that they are perhaps not lost, but rather misunderstood and that they are true Murids. Research using the theoretical perspective of youth culture and urban street culture may potentially yield rich insights (Diouf 2003; Comaroff & Comaroff 2005; Biaya 2005) on emerging Murid stories.

Contrary to Abdullah (2010) and Kane (2011) who note significant numbers of African Americans actively participating in MICA and the Murid religious events in New York, I documented a substantial change in the number of African Americans participating in Murid activities and events. During my fieldwork (2017-2019), few, if any, African Americans attended events. The MICA chaplain was a consistent exception to my observation and was often the only African American regularly present. Further research is needed to determine if this was an anomaly in my research or if indeed, there

[2] Influenced by Shaykh Abdoulaye Dièye.

has been a significant shift since the death of Belozi Harvey. Historical research is needed to examine the significance of Harvey and other African American Murids on the New York Muridiyya from the inception of MICA up to the present. Attempts I made to connect with leaders from Masjid Malcolm Shabazz were unsuccessful. Earlier in the history of Murids in Harlem, this mosque and associated community and leaders played a helpful role in the Muridiyya success.

Further investigation is needed to determine the extent to which Abrahamic faiths influenced Shaykh Amadu Bamba and the formation of the Muridiyya. It appears that the degree to which Bamba embraced forgiving enemies and the practice of nonviolence signals direct biblical influence upon him. Ngom (2016) acknowledges that Bamba was influenced by the Abrahamic faiths, as is evident in Murid hagiography. I go one step beyond Ngom to postulate that Abrahamic-faith influences upon Bamba are beyond those found in the Qur'an or the *manaaqib.*[3] I present evidence that Bamba may have had a Bible in his library and that he sometimes interacted with Christians (albeit Catholic priests associated with his oppressors). The life and teaching of Jesus was an influence upon Bamba's commitment to forgiveness and nonviolence, but further research, engaging theologically and textually with the Islamic Jesus is needed. Discovery of physical evidence (a Bible or other Christian literature) from his library would be a major breakthrough. Researchers skilled in reading his original manuscripts are needed to determine if those writings contain quotes from the Bible.

American converts to Islam who joined the Muridiyya appear in my research. They can be divided into several categories: women who married Murid men and converted to Islam as part of the marriage; an African American Christian convert to Islam through Abdoulaye Dièye; a white non-religious convert to the Muridiyya, and Muslims of

[3] Biographical works celebrating the lives of famous Sufis across the Muslim world.

various origins who found Bamba attractive. The renewed commitment to *da'wah* by NST youth may indicate that Murids will see additional growth by conversion in the United States. Similarly, I interviewed one convert out of the Muridiyya, who is now a Christian. The number of converts, both in and out of the Muridiyya, is sure to grow over time as Murids interact with the multi-faith world that is America. Further research on the experiences of these converts is needed to understand their motivations and experiences.

In this final chapter, I offered a synopsis of my central argument and mapped the development of that argument and the evidence supporting it. I highlighted the contributions to knowledge that I made in several fields. My research was limited in scope, and many things were left unexplored. I hope future researchers can build on what I started. My interactions with many members of the Muridiyya in New York challenged me profoundly, and I am deeply grateful for the growth and change that resulted.

APPENDICES

Appendix One: Tactics for creating Murid Space

1. **Bringing Touba**
    a. Presence of the *shaykh* (Mame Mor Mbacké visiting New York)
    b. Image of Amadu Bamba
    c. Images of Baay Faal, and other Murid caliphs
    d. Café Touba served on the street and on the periphery of events
    e. Meals served on the street during festivals
2. **Participation in Events** (Being numerous together)
    a. Amadu Bamba cultural week (many public and private activities)
    b. Parade (marching with banners)
    c. Celebration of festivals like the *Magal*
    d. Religious conferences
    e. Street vendors selling religious paraphernalia, Senegalese clothing, food, religious books and recordings
    f. *Dahira* meetings
    g. *Xassaid* Days in various cities
    h. Travel as groups to support other Murid communities
3. **Sacralizing Place or the Separation between Sacred and Polluting**
    a. Ritual prayer (*salat*) in the street and in private events
    b. Ritualized takeover of public spaces (often includes drumming and marching)
    c. Perfume sprayed on people and things
4. **Body as Text**
    a. Clothing (*boubou*, jewellery, headdresses)
    b. Make-up
    c. Amulets (rings, boxes, belts, armbands)
    d. Badges
    e. Hair styles
    f. Taking a Wolof name
5. **Moving the Body**
    a. Greeting rituals like the Baay Faal handshake
    b. Seating arrangements at public events
    c. Making an entrance (both women and men do this)
    d. Baay Faal begging on the street with drums and chanting
    e. Circle dance while singing *zikr*
6. **Using the Voice**
    a. *Wacc Kamil* (reading of the entire Qur'an aloud)
    b. Zikr
    c. Qur'an recitations
    d. *Xassaid* singing
    e. The rhetoric of the *griot*
7. **Keur Serigne Touba** … peripheral in Harlem during my research, under renovation

Appendix Two: Quotes from Bamba's verse related to nonviolence

A partial list of quotes from Bamba's verse related to nonviolence, forgiveness and *jihad*

Enemies:

'I have forgiven all my enemies for the sake of Allah, who protects me. I do not fight back or retaliate' (Mbacké 2010:12).

'Turn the enemies' mind to my favor preserving them against any sorrow on my behalf. Through my example guide adults as well as the youth,' (Diop 2011).

Nonviolence:

Spare me ever damaging Thy creatures, be they living near me or afar, be they Muslims or unbelievers (Mbacké 2010:13).

'The worst people are those who respond to offences with other offences' (Mbacké 2015:4).

Jihad

The true warrior in God's path is not he who kills his enemies, but he who combats his ego (*nafs*) to achieve spiritual perfection. Indeed, the toughest *Jihad* consists in hindering one's mind from ever involving in aught that is not proper (Mbacké 2010:13).

I wage my *Jihad* through knowledge and Ethical values, as a humble subject of God and a servant of His Prophet. While others bear weapons to be feared, my sole "arms" are Knowledge and Worship. The true warrior in God's path is not he who kills his enemies, but he who combats his ego (*nafs*) to achieve spiritual perfection (Mbacké 2015:3).

Others have been deluded by their "holy war" *Jihàd*), because they wage war against human beings; They set themselves against their fellow creatures and make regular assaults in the sole order to gain more glamour and more spoils of war; Thus they pretend raising GOD's Word whereas their sole objective is rising to fame and not anything else! So they come back from their so-called "*Jihâd*" covered with sins and a host of misdeeds with all their troops (Mbacké 2010:107).

O you Muslim brethren, exert yourselves! - In the fight against of the carnal soul, so you will win tomorrow paradise in return. He who does not fight against his carnal soul, that one will not obtain the merits which follow from it. And the one who is dedicated to the fight against the carnal soul, will be blessed during his stay in the grave. If you start the spiritual combat, start from the numerical value of the letter "*Dâl*" - which is four - among the enemies. And such a fight - I swear by my life! - is the great holy war, according to the information we received from them. Namely: the carnal soul, the low world, Satan the cursed and the profane passion, each of them is an irreducible enemy[246] (Dieye 1995:80).

You took me out of my home under the pretext that I am the worshipper of God, waging a Jihad of the sword. You pretend I am stockpiling weapons in my homes, and that each of you harbours hatred and envy toward us. You are right, for I am His worshipper, and the servant of the worshipper of God, HE who bestows onto whomever He wills. You are also right when you say, "I am waging war for the sake

[246] My translation: 'Evertuez-vous - ô vous les frères musulmans! - au combat de l'Ame Charnelle, ainsi vous gagnerez Demain le Paradis en contrepartie. Celui qui ne lutte pas contre son Ame Charnelle, celui-là n'obtiendra pas les mérites qui en découlent. Et celui qui se consacre à la lutte contre l'Ame Charnelle, sera un bienheureux durant son séjour dans la tombe. Si vous entreprenez le Combat Spirituel, commencez à partir de la valeur numérique de la lettre "Dâl" - sois quatre - parmi les ennemis. Et un tel combat - je le jure par ma vie ! - est la Grande Guerre Sainte, conformément à l'information que nous avons tenue d'eux. A savoir : l'Ame Charnelle, le Bas Monde, Satan le Maudit et la Passion Profane, chacun d'eux est un ennemi irréductible.'

of God, The Majestic." Indeed, I am waging war not by the catch of weapons, but rather with religious sciences and reverence to the Lord. And I bear witness that the Absolute Master is my witness"[247] (Yaa Jumlatan).

Whenever I recall my sojourn in such a [awful prison] they put me in, and the [misbehaviour] of that unfair governor, I feel like taking arms [to combat them]. But the Prophet himself dissuades me therefrom (Mbacké 2010:17).

[247] Translation from the original by Djiby Daigne. In an email on 26/03/18 Daigne says, 'This quotation is in a *xassaida* called "Yaa Jumlatan" literally meaning "The Crowd" that is to say, "the colonizers" and all their sidekicks accusing him of stockpiling weapons for jihad. It was probably written during his arrest awaiting departure to exile. Since the opening says it all "you took me out of my home."'

Appendix Three: Interviews: Formal and Informal

Interview ID	Location	Interview Date
DSM1	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	10 June 2017
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	3 August 2017
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	13 September 2017
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	2 November 2017
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	7 November 2017
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	6 December 2017
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	16 November 2018
DSM2	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	10 June 2017
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	2 November 2017
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	7 November 2017
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	17 March 2018
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	15 September 2018
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	6 April 2019
DSM3	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	26 July 2017
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	19 November 2017
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	6 December 2017
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	21 January 2018
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	17 March 2018
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	26 July 2018
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	27 July 2018
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	14 October 2018
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	28 October 2018
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	27 July 23019
DSM4	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	10 June 2017
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	2 November 2017
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	7 November 2017
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	21 January 2018
DSM5	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	10 June 2017
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	17 March 2018
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	6 January 2018
DSM6	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	3 August 2017
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	2 November 2017
	Restaurant Chez Jacob	26 July 2018
	Private home, Harlem	27 July 2018
DSM8	Private home, Bronx	26 July 2017
	NST General Assembly meeting at Darou Salam Market, Harlem	21 January 2018
MICA1	His apartment, Harlem	31 May 2017
	His apartment, Harlem	8 September 2017
	His apartment, Harlem	14 September 2017
	Darou Salam Market, Harlem	2 November 2017
	After Friday prayers at the Malian Association building	5 January 2018
MICA2	MICA *iftar* dinner in the basement of St Calvary/St	31 May 2017

	Marks United Methodist Church	
	MICA office, Harlem	1 June 2017
	MICA office, Harlem	12 June 2017
	MICA office, Harlem	9 September 2017*
	MICA office, Harlem	17 March 2018
	After Friday prayers at the Malian Association building	13 July 2018
	After Friday prayers at the Malian Association building	22 November 2019
MICA3	On the sidewalk in front of Association des Sénégalaise d'Amérique on 116th Street, Harlem	30 August 2017
	Before Friday prayers at the Malian Association building	8 September 2017
	Prestige Media, a store on 116th St., Harlem	7 November 2017
	Association des Sénégalaise d'Amérique, Harlem	15 October 2018*
MICA4	MICA *iftar* dinner in the basement of St Calvary/St Marks United Methodist Church	31 May 2017
	MICA office, Harlem	3 August 2017
	MICA office, Harlem	6 January 2018
	MICA office, Harlem	15 September 2018
	MICA office, Harlem	4 April 2019
	MICA office, Harlem	5 April 2019
MICA5	Café Dandy, Harlem	1 February 2017
	Make My Cake, Harlem	1 June 2017
	At his home in the Bronx	26 June 2017
	MICA fund raiser St Calvary/St Marks United Methodist Church	27 June 2017
	Phone interview	31 October 2017*
	NYC *Magal* at Salem United Methodist Church, Harlem	8 November 2017
	Supper at his home in the Bronx	18 November 2017
	Phone interview	4 January 2018
	At his home in the Bronx	18 March 2018
	After Friday prayers at the Malian Association building	14 September 2018
	At his home in the Bronx and driving in his car	15 September 2018
	Stayed at his home in the Bronx	11-16 October 2018
	Phone interview	4 April 2018*
	Phone interview	18 April 2018
	Phone interview	6 September
MICA6	Keur Coumba Restaurant	6 January 2018

MICA7	NYC *Magal* at Salem United Methodist Church, Harlem	8 November 2017
MICA8	Apartment of Imam Khadim Boussou, Harlem	8 September 2017
	Apartment of Imam Khadim Boussou, Harlem	14 September 2017
MICA9	MICA office, Harlem	29 July 2018
	Masjed Al-Falah, Harlem	12 October 2018*
	MICA office, Harlem	4 April 2019
	Before Friday Prayers at the Malian Association Building, Harlem	22 November 2019
NTS1	MICA office, Harlem	26 July 2017
	Restaurant Chez Jacob	8 September 2017*
	On the set of a film shoot for Lifeline telenovela, Luxury Leasing, New Rochelle, NY	7 January 2018
	Phone interview	6 April 2019
NST2	NYC Magal at Salem United Methodist Church, Harlem	8 November 2017
	Make My Cake (first part of interview) and Keur Coumba (second part) both in Harlem	7 December 2017*
	Daara Ji masjid, Harlem	11 October 2018
NST3	MICA office, Harlem	26 July 2017
	On set of film shoot for Lifeline telenovela	7 January 2018
NST4	Lenox Sapphire Harlem restaurant	12 July 2018*
	NST membership day, Malian Association building, Harlem	31 March 2019
NST5	Ziar Mame Diarra Bousso at the Black National Theater, Harlem	31 July 2018*
NST6	Ziar Mame Diarra Bousso at the Black National Theater, Harlem	31 July 2018*
NST7	Association des Sénégalaise d'Amérique, Harlem	20 January 2018*
	NST BBQ Morningside Park, Harlem	15 July 2018
NST8	NST BBQ Morningside Park, Harlem	15 July 2018
NST9	NST BBQ Morningside Park, Harlem	15 July 2018
	Followed him while he did repairs to a Murid business on 116th and as he interacted with others up and down the street	13 October 2018
	His apartment in Harlem	13 October 2018
	Association des Sénégalaise d'Amérique, Harlem Senegal	4 April 2019

	Independence Day celebrations	
NST10	NST BBQ Morningside Park, Harlem	15 July 2018
NST11	MICA office, Harlem	26 July 2017
NST12	*Magal* at Black National Theater	28 October 2018*
NST13	NST Ziar at Malian Association building, Harlem	30 July 2019
MAG1	*Magal* NYC Salem United Methodist Church	8 November 2017*
MAG2	*Magal* NYC Salem United Methodist Church	8 November 2017*
MAG3	*Magal* NYC Salem United Methodist Church	8 November 2017*
MAG4	*Magal* NYC Salem United Methodist Church	8 November 2017*
DJ1	*Sopéy Shaykhul Khadeem* School/Mosque (Daara Ji)	2 August 2017
	Sopéy Shaykhul Khadeem School/Mosque (Daara Ji)	31 August 2017
	Pikine Restaurant, Harlem	7 November 2017
	Sopéy Shaykhul Khadeem School/Mosque (Daara Ji)	17 November 2017*
	Sopéy Shaykhul Khadeem School/Mosque (Daara Ji)	20 January 2018
	At his house in Touba, Senegal	15 August 2018*
	Sopéy Shaykhul Khadeem School/Mosque (Daara Ji)	5 April 2019
DJ2	*Sopéy Shaykhul Khadeem* School/Mosque (Daara Ji)	17 March 2018
DJ3	Bus stop and on bus riding between DSM and Daara Ji on Frederick Douglas Blvd.	13 September 2018
DJ4	*Sopéy Shaykhul Khadeem* School/Mosque (Daara Ji)	22 November 2019
SCG1	*Magal* NYC Salem United Methodist Church	8 November 2017
	Consulate General of Senegal, Harlem, NY	7 December 2017
NM1	On the set of a film shoot for Lifeline telenovela, Luxury Leasing, New Rochelle, NY	7 January 2018
NM2	On the set of a film shoot for Lifeline telenovela, Luxury Leasing, New Rochelle, NY	7 January 2018
NM3	Association des Sénégalaise d'Amérique, Harlem	3 November 2017
NM4	Double Dutch Expresso, Harlem	30 July 2017
NM5	At his home in Louga, Senegal	14 August 2018
NM6	At his home in Louga, Senegal	14 August 2018

NM7	His office, Columbia University, NY	15 October 2018*
NM8	Association des Sénégalaise d'Amérique, Harlem	28 October 2018
NM9	*Magal* NYC Salem United Methodist Church	8 November 2017
	Magal NYC Salem United Methodist Church	28 October 2018
NM10	NST BBQ Morningside Park, Harlem	15 July 2018
NM11	Mt. Calvary/St. Marks United Methodist Church	3 August 2017
NM12	African Square, Harlem	28 July 2019*
MCM1	Private home, Bronx	18 November 2017
MCM2	Her apartment, Bronx	18 November 2017
MCM3	Restaurant Chez Jacob	2 November 2017
MCM4	Mt. Calvary/St. Marks United Methodist Church	27 July 2017
MCM5	MICA fundraiser, Mt. Calvary/St. Marks United Methodist Church	26 June 2017
MCM6	On the street, corner of 75th and Columbus	12 June 2017
MCM7	Harlem Islamic Cultural Center, Tijani mosque	30 July 2018
	MICA office, Harlem	12 October 2018
MCM8	*Sopéy Shaykhul Khadeem* School/Mosque (Daara Ji)	26 July 2018
	Les Ambassades restaurant, Harlem	29 July 2018
MCM10	African Square, Harlem recorded and transcribed	28 July 2018
	At his apartment, Manhattan	30 July 2018
	At his apartment, Manhattan	6 April 2019
MCM11	Lenox Sapphire Harlem restaurant	14 July 2018
MCM12	African Square, Harlem recorded and transcribed	28 July 2018
MCM13	Jeuf Jeul's apartment, Harlem	13 October 2018
MCM14	Computer Technology store, 247 W. 116th St, Harlem	15 October 2018*
MCM15	*Magal* at Black National Theater	28 October 2018
MCM16	*Magal* at Black National Theater	28 October 2018
MCM17	*Magal* at Black National Theater	28 October 2018*
	His apartment, Brooklynn	3 April 2019*
MCM18	His apartment, Reading, PA	24 July 2017
	His apartment, Mohnton, PA	17 July 2018
	His home, Robesonia, PA	28 August 2018
	His home, Robesonia, PA	4 June 2019

MCM19	Harriet Tubman Learning Center Playground, Harlem	28 July 2019*
MCM20	Harriet Tubman Learning Center Playground, Harlem	28 July 2019*
MCM21	Harriet Tubman Learning Center Playground, Harlem	28 July 2019*
MCM22	On the street, Bamba Day Parade	28 July 2019*
MCM23	Harriet Tubman Learning Center Playground, Harlem	28 July 2019
MCM24	NST Ziar, Malian Association building, Harlem	30 July 2019
MCM25	Harriet Tubman Learning Center lobby, Harlem His apartment, Bronx	29 July 2019 31 July 2019
MCM26	Phone interview UN General Assembly Hall, NY	19 May 2019 28 July 2019
MCM27	A store on 116th St, Harlem	13 October 2018
SEN1	*Khidmatul Khadim* (International Sufi School of Peace and Service), Pout, Senegal *Khidmatul Khadim*, Pout, Senegal	10 August 2018* 11 August 2018*
SEN2	Amadu Bamba Library, Touba, Senegal	15 August 2018*
SEN3	His home, Touba, Senegal	15 August 2018*
SEN4	*Khidmatul Khadim*, Pout, Senegal	10 August 2018
SEN5	*Khidmatul Khadim*, Pout, Senegal	10 August 2018
SEN6	*Khidmatul Khadim,* Pout, Senegal	10 August 2018
SEN7	*Khidmatul Khadim*, Pout, Senegal	10 August 2018

*Interview that was recorded and transcribed

Appendix Four: Glossary of non-English words

addiyya (Arabic): offering, gift
ʿAjamī (Arabic): Wolof written with Arabic script
Alastu (Arabic): lit. 'am I not', A distinctive Sufi theme referring to primordial covenant, the pact that God made with the unborn souls of humanity before the creation of the world
ataaya (Wolof): strong, sweet green tea
baal ma akk (Wolof): Forgive me if I offended anyone
Baay Faal (Wolof): A Murid sub-order, disciples of Ibrahima Fall, the first disciple of Amadu Bamba, who served him in total devotion. *Baay Faals* are not required to do the canonical prayers or fasting during Ramadan, their service it their worship. Collectively the disciples of Shaykh Ibrahima Fall are called *Baay Faal*. Baay Faal refers to a male disciple and *Yaay Faal* refers to a female disciple.
baña fayu (Wolof): refuse to retaliate or fight back
bañ̃ñ def fitna (Wolof): do not cause suffering
baraka (Arabic): blessing, grace, divine power
bëgg jàmm (Wolof): desire peace
boubous (Wolof): Senegalese robe, common loose sleeved robe worn in much of West Africa
Café Touba (Wolof): A popular Senegalese coffee, roasted coffee beans are ground with selim pepper to make a spiced coffee, Murids attribute the recipe to Bamba.
cheikh (Arabic): An honorific title synonymous with shaykh, also a common men's name in Senegal
da'wah (Arabic): invitation to Islam
daar al-Islam (Arabic): house of Islam
daar al-kufr (Arabic): house of the unbelievers
daar al-Murid (Arabic): house of the Murids, a special case of *daar al-Islam*
daar al-Muridiyya (Arabic): house of Muridiyya
daara (Wolof): Qur'anic school, often connected to a large Murid farm
*Daara Ji (*Wolof): 'the school' nick name for *Daaray Sopey Shaykhoul Khadim*
daara tarbiyya (Wolof): a form of education where students divide their time between study, work in the shaykh's fields and meditation
dahira (Arabic): circle group, a Senegalese Sufi association common among the Tijaniyya and the Muridiyya
do-rag (English): cloth worn on the head, popular with African American men
du xeex (Wolof): do not fight
du'a (Arbic): supplication
espace (French): space
fatwah (Arabic): opinion
gàddaay (Wolof): exodus, Arabic: *hijra*
gamou (Wolof): religious festival in honour of a saint
fana (Arabic): annihilation of the self, Greek: gnosis
grand-place (French): the public square
griot (French): praise singer, poet, common across West Africa
gypsy cabs (English): an unlicensed taxi
iman (Arabic): the pillars of belief, belief in God, angels, holy books, prophets, and the final judgement
Insa (Wolof): Jesus

ihsan (Arabic): beautiful behaviour (Qu'ran 16:90), in Sufism it is associated with the Hadith of Gabriel and the phrase, 'worship God as if you see Him, for even though man does not see God, God always sees man'.

islam (Arabic): the pillars of practice: confession of faith (*shahada*), prayer (*salat*), alms (*zakat*), fasting in Ramadan, and pilgrimage (*hajj*).

Islam maure (French): theory developed by Paul Marty, *Islam maure* referred to North African Islam that was supposedly closer to 'true' Islam and *Islam noir* (black) referred to Sub-Saharan Islam that was imagined to be a mixture of Arab Islam and African traditional religious beliefs.

Islam noir (French): Black Islam, see *Islam maure*

Jakhanke (Mandinka): A distinctly pacifist Muslim tradition of West Africa, part of the Qadiriyya

jàmm (Wolof): peace

jàmm amul njek (Wolof): *peace* has no price

jàmm ci la lep xac (Wolof): all things are possible with peace

jàmma gënn (Wolof): peace is better

jàmma gënn ay (Wolof): peace is better than conflict

jeuf-jeul (Wolof): You reap what you sow

jihad (Arabic): to struggle

jihad al-akbar (Arabic): the greater struggle refers to *jihad al-nafs*

jihad al-asghar (Arabic): the lesser struggle, an external fight against injustice, may include warfare

jihad al-nafs (Arabic): an internal fight to subdue the soul (nafs) and submit to God's will

jikko yu rafet (Wolof): traditional Wolof virtues

Keur Serigne Touba (Wolof): house of the Lord of Touba, wherever diaspora communities have settled they have sought to secure a house to serve the needs of migrants, anything from food and shelter to a place to worship and a meeting place for Murids.

Khadimou Rassoul (Wolof/Arabic): servant of the Apostle, a title that Shaykh Amadu Bamba liked to use to refer to himself as the servant of Muhammed.

Khalifa General (Arabic/French): refers the head of a religious order

khidma (Wolof): religious service to one's shaykh or community

Korite (Wolof): The Festival of Breaking the Fast, Arabic: *Eid al-Fitr*

kurel (Wolof): a group, choir

kurel xassaid (Wolof): a choir that sings Bamba's poetry

lieu (French): place

liggéey ngir Serigne Touba (Wolof): ritual work for Serigne Touba

magal (Wolof): lit. praise, also refers to the annual celebration of the day Bamba was sent into exile

mame (Wolof): grand parent

m*aqasid al-shariah (*purpose, intent of shariah)

Masalik-ul-Jinan (Arabic): Ways to Heaven, the title of a Bamba's most famous work

mashallah (Arabic): lit. 'God has will it', expression of joy, praise or thankfulness

masjid (Arabic): mosque, a place of prayer

Maziyariyya (Arabic): a nonviolent Muslim community

Mouride (French): Murid, this French spelling is common in Senegal

murid (Arabic): an aspirant, the disciple of a *murshid* (spiritual guide)

Murid (Wolof): a disciple of Shaykh Amadu Bamba, a member of the Muridiyya

nafs (Arabic): the ego or soul

nasaran (Arabic): Christians, in West Africa often referring to the French or white people

ndaw (Wolof): youth or ambassador, depending on the context

ndigel (Wolof): command, a command or order from one's shaykh

ndogo (Wolof): the meal breaking the fast, *iftar* in Arabic
ngente (Wolof): baby naming ceremony
nitu jàmm (Wolof): (person of peace)
njaxaso (Wolof): patchwork clothing often favoured by Baay Faals
Oustaz (Arabic): teacher or professor, a title
qadi (Arabic): judge
Qadiriyya (Arabic): one of the Sufi orders
qibla (Arabic): orientation towards Mecca
qutb (Arabic): 'pole of the age', a reformer of Islam
rakat (Arabic): one prayer cycle of the *canonical* prayers
sabra (Wolof): a popular Senegalese dance style
sadiq (Arabic): true or truthful
salaam (Arabic): peace
salat (Arabic): the five times daily ritual prayers
samā (Arabic): listening to religious music and poetry, a Sufi practice
shahada (Arabic): The Muslim profession of faith 'there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah'
shalom (Hebrew): peace
sharia (Arabic): lit. 'the way' or 'the way to the watering hole', Islamic religious law that governs all of domains of life
Sufi (English): Sufism is the generally accepted term for Islamic mysticism, coming from the Arabic term, *tasawwuf*, literally 'the process of becoming a Sufi' (Ernst 2011:21). Sufis are people who seek ethical and spiritual perfection through union with God, friendship with God or closeness to God. Sufis seek purification of the heart and combat the ego through spiritual disciplines including: asceticism, worship, traveling, love, submitting to a spiritual master, and commitment to saints (see Ernst 2011:1-31).
Sunna (Arabic): the way of the prophet, the part of Islamic law based on the customary practices of Muhammed
Sunni (Arabic): referring to the major branch of Islam
sura (Arabic): a chapter of the Qur'an
Tabaski (Wolof): The Feast of Sacrifice, Arabic: *Eid-al-Adha*
talibés (Wolof): students or disciples, often in Senegal referring to the children begging on the streets
taqiyya (Arabic): prudence, hiding one's faith to escape persecution
tarbiyya (Arabic): education of the soul, a form of education Bamba introduced for the masses of uneducated adults in Senegal
tariqa (Arabic): path, commonly translated as brotherhood or order
Tijan (Arabic): and/or *Tijani*, someone or something belonging to the Tijaniyya Sufi order founded by Sīdī 'Aḥmad al Tijānī, an Algerian scholar, born in 1737
tirailleurs (French): indigenous soldiers from the colonies serving in the French military
Touba (Wolof): from Arabic 'Ṭūbā', meaning 'blessedness, tree of paradise', the second largest city in Senegal. Founded by Shaykh Amadu Bamba it is the spiritual centre for Murids everywhere and the site of their annual pilgrimage.
wacc kamil (Wolof): reading aloud the entire Qur'an in one session
waxi Serigne Touba (Wolof): the sayings of Shaykh Amadu Bamba
wird (Arabic): the specialized prayer of a Sufi order given by their founder
Wolof (Wolof): the name of the dominate ethnic group in Senegal and their language, the trade language of Senegambia
Wolofal (Wolof): Wolof language written in modified Arabic script, a form of Ajami. Wolofal also can refer to the practice of singing the history of the Shaykh Amadu Bamba and the Muridiyya, an oral form of hagiography that holds true to the core

text of the story but has room for reinterpretation and fitting the story into current events and local context. Much like how the Bible records the ways Hebrew people told and retold their history to make a particular point in their respective times.

xam-xam (Wolof): Islamic science, for Sufis this encompasses three broad categories: *Islam*, *iman* and *ihsan*

xassaid (Wolof): from Arabic, devotional and educational poetry by Amadu Bamba written in Arabic

Yaay Faal (Wolof): see *Baay Faal*

yërmande (Wolof): mercy

yoonu jàmm (Wolof): the way or path of peace, nonviolence

zawiya (Arabic): Sufi lodge

ziar (Wolof): to visit from Arabic *ziyar*

zikr (Arabic): remembrance of God, the repetition of divine names or religious formulae (also spelled *dhikr)*

zikru Allah (Wolof): see *zikr*

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See Appendix Three: Interviews

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